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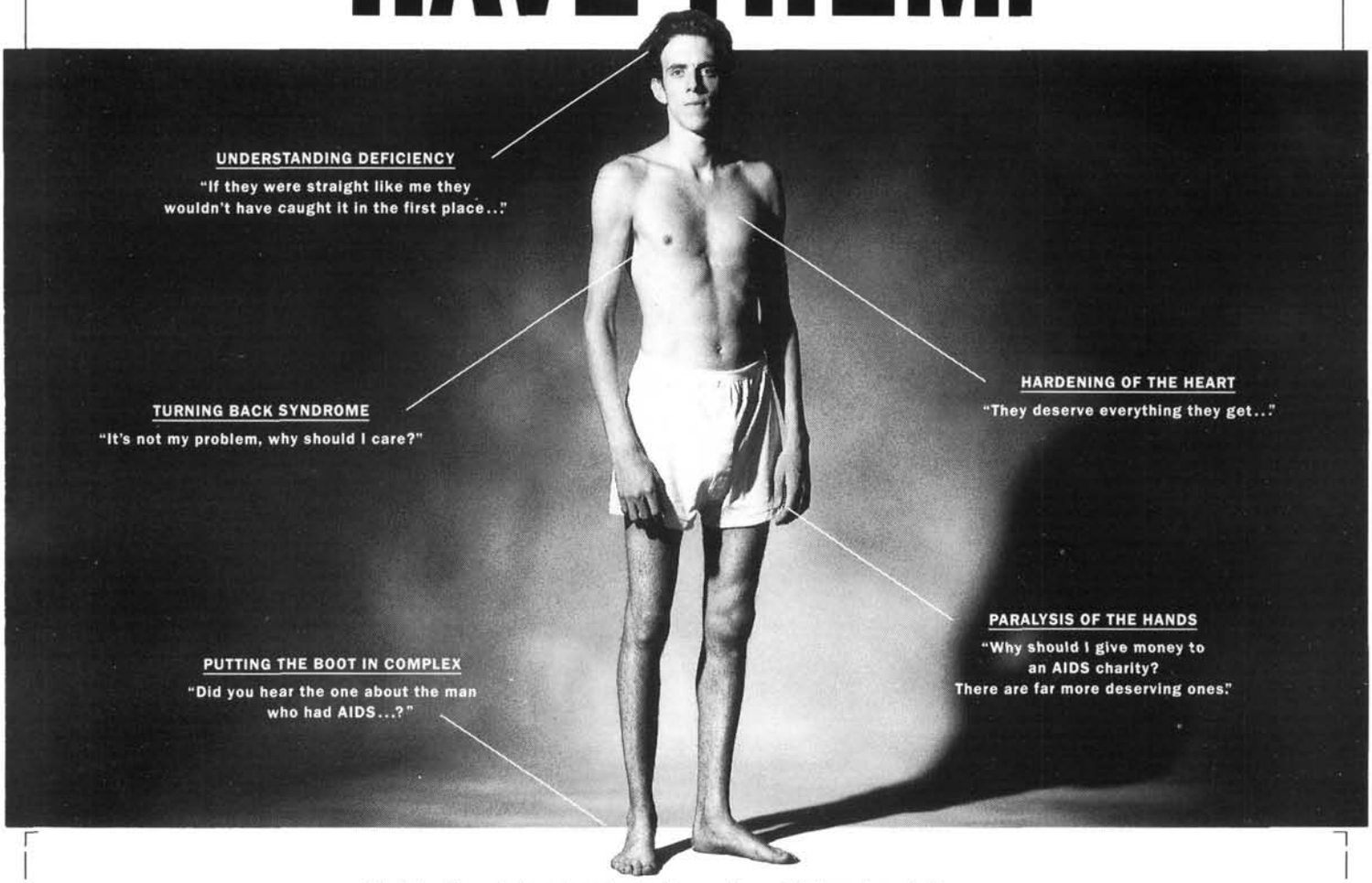
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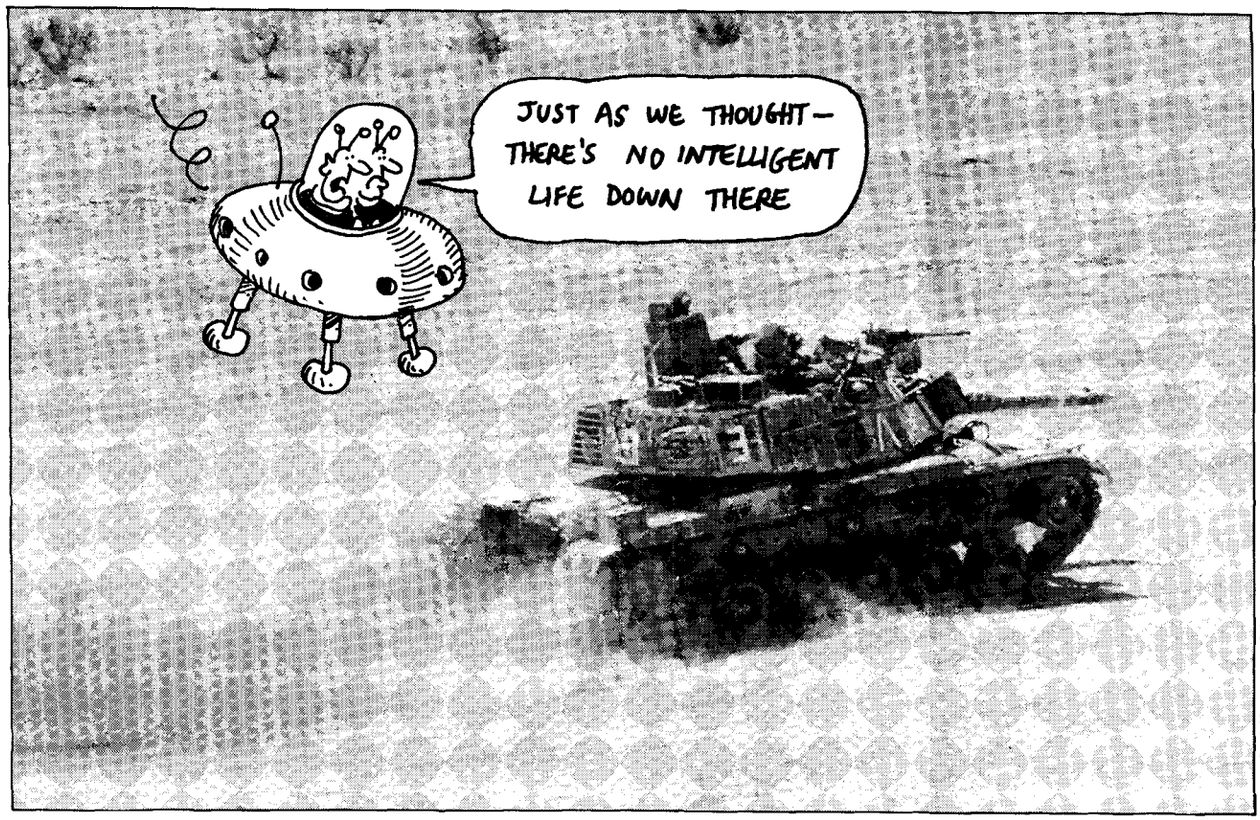
George Joffe looks to an uncertain future

Aftermath



Cartoon: Nick Newman Select

At the time of writing, it is still not clear if there will be war in the Gulf or not. The uncertainty makes little difference, however, to the crucial problem of the future structure of the Middle East. Ironically enough, the parameters of the problem will not significantly alter, whether hostilities occur or whether Saddam Hussein withdraws from Kuwait, for they conceal a profound contradiction in US and Western policies.

There is virtually no doubt that the multinational force will eventually expel Iraq from Kuwait. The hostilities may also destroy the institutions of the Iraqi state and encourage its neighbours – Turkey, Iran and Syria – to leap into the power vacuum thus created with unpredictable consequences. The state may well survive however, for even if Saddam Hussein himself were to be toppled, his successor is likely to resemble him. Saddam may even remain in charge of Iraq, determined on revenge but humiliated by war or voluntary withdrawal. In every case, the multinational alliance will have to construct new security arrangements for the Middle East.

For the West, the priority will be to ensure stability in the flow of Gulf oil, for oil price and volume fluctuations have highly unpleasant marginal effects on the integrated market economies of the developed world. The best solution would be to disarm Iraq but, unless the Iraqi state has collapsed or been occupied, this cannot be achieved without global disarmament throughout the Middle East, including Israel. And Israel will not comply; nor can Washington easily force it to do so.

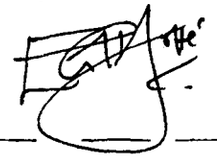
The alternative would be a permanent military force to guarantee Gulf security and to control the region. It cannot be found among the Arab Gulf states – otherwise US-led intervention in early August would have been unnecessary. Nor can Washington provide it alone; it would be too costly and, furthermore, probably unacceptable to Saudi Arabia, ever mindful of its Islamic reputation. Indeed, US public opinion would not accept such a commitment, given the increasingly unpopular US military presence in Europe.

Alternatives will be needed – but not from the Arab world, for Arab public opinion outside the Gulf on the issue is generally hostile and most governments are too timorous. The three Arab partners in the multi-national force offer little hope. Syria is too opportunistic and unreliable, Saudi Arabia too weak and Egypt too inherently unstable.

There are really only two other possibilities. Iran could guarantee the Gulf. Despite US reluctance after a decade of opposition to the Islamic revolution, the Gulf states have recently proposed linking the Gulf Co-operation Council to Iran for this very purpose. Elsewhere, Turkey and Israel could guarantee the status quo. Turkey, however, would be a reluctant partner at best. To Western policymakers, therefore, only Israel seems likely to guarantee Western interests and ensure regional security.

Yet that is also the contradiction. Washington recognises that, despite its rejection of 'linkage', its Arab allies expect it to settle the Palestinian question. Shamir knows, however, that he cannot be forced to accept that, for Washington needs his wholehearted support. Yet Washington's failure to deliver on Palestine will intensify Arab anger and undermine the stability of sympathetic Arab governments.

President Bush's conundrum is that he cannot achieve regional security without Israel, but he cannot achieve regional stability with it. Stability, then, will have to yield to security , as in the 1950s, despite the experiences of the past 40 years. The future, in short, will be outdated neo-imperialism in place of a new world security order. ●



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EYE TO EYE

Beatrix Campbell talks to Adam Lury

Positive Image

Adam Lury is managing partner at the advertising agency Howell Henry Chaldecott Lury

You're smack in the middle of an industry that has been instrumental in constructing certain images of society, and you're interested in the language of empowerment. Where do the possibilities for change lie?
There are particular advertisements, like our work for Fuji, which I feel are very clear expressions of it, but I feel that it's throughout, a whole style of communication that we've produced. In the 50s advertising sold something logical, tangible, functional about a product. Now that loyalty's got to be based on a belief in a company.

So you're selling some kind of identification with the company, because it will be demonstrated through the ads to have values that people want to identify with?
There are a whole number of areas where companies are putting things into practice that are socially positive in one form or another. They're missing out on a major marketing tool, which is that they can make those things public. At the moment particularly in the States a lot of companies are fending off boycotts. Heinz have just switched to dolphin friendly tuna, and there's the clean clothes campaign over here – you only buy clothes not made in sweatshops.

The Daily Telegraph quoted a figure of 50% of people in Britain who are operating some kind of boycott in one or other of their purchases. Companies should start saying, 'Let's tell people what we do do. If we pay people properly, if we treat them properly, maybe we should make that part of the advertising.'

General Motors have just done a whole campaign which is based around the people who've designed and built the car, and they've got this female car worker saying 'Why I'm very proud that we're working on this particular model'.

What comes to mind by association with, say, Ford in Britain, is that era of strikes, heavy duty foremen, sabotage on the assembly line. Given how a company sits in people's collective memories, I imagine it would be very hard selling that history to the consumer. How far do you need some sense that the company truthfully has modernised, is more democratic? Do you influence it happening?
I can't impose it on them, they've got to want to do it. But if you say that's going to be a really interesting competitive advantage for them, and we can do an ad out of that, then that is a great opportunity. And if it works for them, other companies will try it.

What is it in the culture that's changed to make people identify values with products? What kind of values have a premium in the popular imagination?
I think the whole breakthrough of mass marketing, where units of production equal units of consumption, has broken down for a number of reasons – like the feminist and black movements. The accent is on the economic power of the individual, people are discovering there are different ways open to them, in which they can influence things.

I think *Today* carried a story not so long ago, about how a post office union had banned girly calendars, and were also proposing a boycott of stores such as Hennes for their sexist advertising. And it wasn't a cynical piece, it was very positive – people changing their environment. Advertising is really reprehensible when it's used against you, but I think you can use it positively.

Give an example...
I suppose one that does try a little bit is the Oxo campaign where at least family tensions are being presented, however glossy it is. There's the Bisto campaign at the moment, which at least says that there are such things as single parents. Also the Intercity ad that's called *Relax*. I remember it took me three viewings to work out what was so fresh about it – that there's not a single white face in there. And it was just presented as 'this is life'...

And this is Britain...
Yes. All of a sudden you're miles away from Jimmy Saville and the three white men and the one white woman. If you can get mainstream brands using that in peak television hours, you have all that authority working positively.

You're a centre of attention in lots of ways, you're felt to be 'now'. What's changed to allow your operation to be not just something which is felt to be marginal, critical, but central, and very successful?
One factor is the emergence of the baby boomer generation. They're not fully in power yet. What they are is very powerful in the communications industry, and our ideas get picked up by people who are intrigued and interested by the things that we represent.

Do you hold still to some of the values of the 60s? You don't feel that they're antique?
They're antique often in the way that they're expressed. People have sort of held on to the purist centre of it, that's the way it was, rather than incorporating it into change.

And what is the substance of those values?
That there are alternatives. And at the same time interdependence, the insight that what I do here affects what happens in China. For me the most telling instance of that is the picture in *Newsweek* of Chinese students in Tiananmen Square with English slogans on their backs. What that said was: Those people are communicating with me; they know it goes through a satellite. That's a 90s expression of a 60s thought.

There was all this great fuss about Band Aid. In the 60s George Harrison did this massive pop concert in aid of Bangladesh – that was the first Band Aid. Geldof is heralded because he got the media thing, he used the technology. Harrison had a concert and then raised money, which was the appropriate thing to do at the time.

There's still probably a lament in that generation, for a form of politics, which is on the streets. That's what a rebellion is. You're talking about transformations within institutions, or in culture like advertising. What's happened between the 60s and now, that has generated that pessimism about politics, but at the same time a real commitment to change?
The same group of people have had a grip on power for 10 years, so strong that it seems immoveable.

And what about the Left?
So often the focus was on what you are going to give up, what you're going to lose. It was actually as elitist as the Right. Also, they internalised faster and more deeper than the Right, the real contempt and fear of the media, which is silly, because the media is the natural constituency for those people.

Winston Churchill said, 'television is a tuppenny-hapenny Punch and Judy show.' Margaret Thatcher said that it's the most powerful medium on earth, it elected Reagan. If you say it's wrong, pernicious, you've got a disempowering message not an empowering message. There's no point having a poll tax demonstration in Scotland if the cameras aren't there. A woman got killed in Trafalgar Square and nobody talks about it in the media – you lose all of that power.

One of the things Thatcherism calls to mind is the extraordinary phrase, 'There's no such thing as society, there's only individuals'. Advertising speaks to individuals as individuals. It speaks to their subjectivity, not to their sense of belonging to a corporate group, or a class. Is there a sense in

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Photography: Jean Attree

which your work can be seen perfectly adequately in the context of Thatcherism?
Advertising has been a great focus for things which annihilate identity. I think that Thatcher latched onto one dynamic within that era, which was self-empowerment. Suddenly the Left was saying, 'I don't know what we'll have then, we'll have disempowering', when there may have been loads of other things going on. Interdependence, Jesse Jackson's quilt for America – I think that's a really powerful thought, trying to articulate a different value. Because you reject greed, doesn't mean that you should reject enabling.

What are going to be the key terms if the Left does manage to regroup and re-emerge?
Communication. Without question.

Communicating what?
For me that's a secondary question. It's not that it doesn't matter, but unless you are going to communicate, there is no way of reaching people today. If those groups and organisations embrace and use communication then they'll become a force. I think some of the central values will still be there.

There is growing popular recognition, of interdependence: what happened in Chernobyl still affects me in Wales. There was the pote· .mage of the seals washing up on the beach, that came from over there. We are not an island anymore, we are all wired up together.

All sorts of fantasies were constructed around the commodity that were felt to be inauthentic, how far do you run the same risk of fetishising corporations?
I think that we would never construct values around a corporation that aren't true to that company. Most companies really do believe passionately what they are about. If you put something out there which is not them, you don't work with them long. But the distinction between the true and the good, the product unadorned and the company unadorned – I'm not sure I accept that.

Do you get a sense that what you represent is travelling with a drift in the industry, or is it something which stands out as a critique? We know that you have been stiffly criticised.
I think it is the leading edge of the industry, and the biggest danger in the way that the industry responds is to present us as the fringe. It's an incredibly dogmatic industry. The standard line on our work is: 'I'm not sure I like it, but I think it is very interesting'. There's sympathy, but there is still a lot of scepticism and fear.●

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John Lloyd on Soviet depression

Deep Freeze

The Lithuanian murders of January 12 and 13, around the Vilnius tv station, direct us to make a particular kind of inventory. It is particularly important that this be done in the pages of *Marxism Today* – both because of its origins, and because in these pages there has been much praise for Mikhail Gorbachev, and some belief that he could reform the Soviet Union while still keeping it facing in a direction which might be described as socialist.

The first inventory is of what has *not* been achieved after six years of Gorbachev's leadership during most of which period the twin watchwords have been perestroika and glasnost.

First, civil society does not have any effective institutions of power which can prevail against that of the Communist Party, or of the military and the KGB acting in the name of what they interpret to be its true interests. The soviets controlled by nationalist and/or democratic political forces, including even that of the Russian Republic, have not gained or been granted powers over armed force, or expenditure, or the law, which can effectively stand against those of the central authority. Vytautas Landsbergis, president of Lithuania, was constrained to propose – on the aftermath of the tv station massacres – a government in exile, since his own was incapable of protecting itself. The declarations of independence have been shown to be... declarations.

Second, the formal declaration, a little less than a year ago, of the ending of the Communist Party's monopoly of power is also just... a declaration. Though other parties have been created, and in some of the republics actually command a majority of support, the Communist Party still disposes through its agencies of force. No other writ runs effectively. Marxism-leninism has not yet given up the fight.

Third, the destalinisation of society turns out to have been more superficial than many thought or hoped. In part, this is because the Friend of the Toilers has proved to retain a certain enduring popularity in many quarters of society – the more so, as far as can be discerned, as reform ends in chaos and shortages. But it will not do to simply blame the people Soviet institutions remain leninist-stalinist in most essential features, and these remain as bases round which reaction can regroup. Though it is true that some parts of the Soviet state – particularly the foreign service under Shevardnadze – were enthusiastic destalinisers, most were not.

Fourth, flourishing of free opinion in reformist and anti-communist publications is now been shown to lack the power to withstand a tightening of the reins on which it has been allowed to play. The Latvian independent news service has been closed. The weekly central tv programme Vzglyad was stopped from airing programmes about Eduard Shevardnadze's resignation, and it, too, may be closed. The press has never been 'free': it operated under a tolerance much greater than hitherto. Once the tolerance is withdrawn, there is nothing the reformists and radical editors and journalists can do about it. There remain plenty of hacks to put out the propaganda.

Fifth, a market system has never been established. This is largely because one has never been attempted, in spite of the vast economic debate of the past five years. That debate had, by the middle of last year, seen the leading lights among presidential economic advisors propose plans which would have turned the Soviet economy far towards the market. But they remained... plans. Though they have never been explicitly junked, it is evident that Gorbachev no longer wishes to, or is able to, support them. The command economy rules still, though much less efficiently than before much more ridden by corruption and crime rings. The distribution system is now reaping the harvest of lack of investment: this will mean that even if the command system can get an extra lease of political life, it will not be able, literally, to deliver.

The market is, as far as one can tell, unpopular. Certainly the co-operatives, which are the closest most Soviet citizens come to their own form of market, are deeply unpopular – largely because they allow some people to get rich and because they buy or acquire scarce goods cheap and sell them dear. In a deficit economy, there is no possibility of co-operatives, which lack established lines of supply, operating at all without graft: they suffer the odium which black marketeers did in Britain during the war.

These facts provide the backdrop against which Vilnius was possible, and against which more of the same remains possible, even likely. One cannot, reasonably, however, talk of a reversion to the days when that kind of thing was decreed from the centre, and operations continued until the source of the trouble was removed. There remains an important doubt as to whether the centre knew and wanted the murders – important not because it can escape ultimate responsibility, but important because it is in these ambiguities that the prospect of further crackdown, or a lurch back to some form of reform will be detected.

'Gorbachev cannot save socialism, and he remains what he has always been – a non-elected dictator, albeit one who appeared to want a society in which dictatorship was not the norm'

Gorbachev cannot save socialism, and he remains what he always has been – a non-elected dictator, albeit one who appeared to want a society in which dictatorship was no longer the norm. There may still be a chance that he can return to that road: we cannot afford to be cavalier about that possibility, even after Vilnius, since the West and East have so much to lose if the conclusion must be drawn that it is a possibility no longer.

He promised so much: now, as we make the inventory, all we are sure of is that he has let eastern Europe escape, and this is probably irrecoverable short of a war.

Nothing beside remains, or will remain if reaction continues. In the name of socialism, he is crushing independence movements which are accused of the crime – it *is* still a crime – of seeking to restore 'bourgeois rule'. Socialism, we have to recognise it, is the route of reaction.●

Illustration: Michael Sheehy

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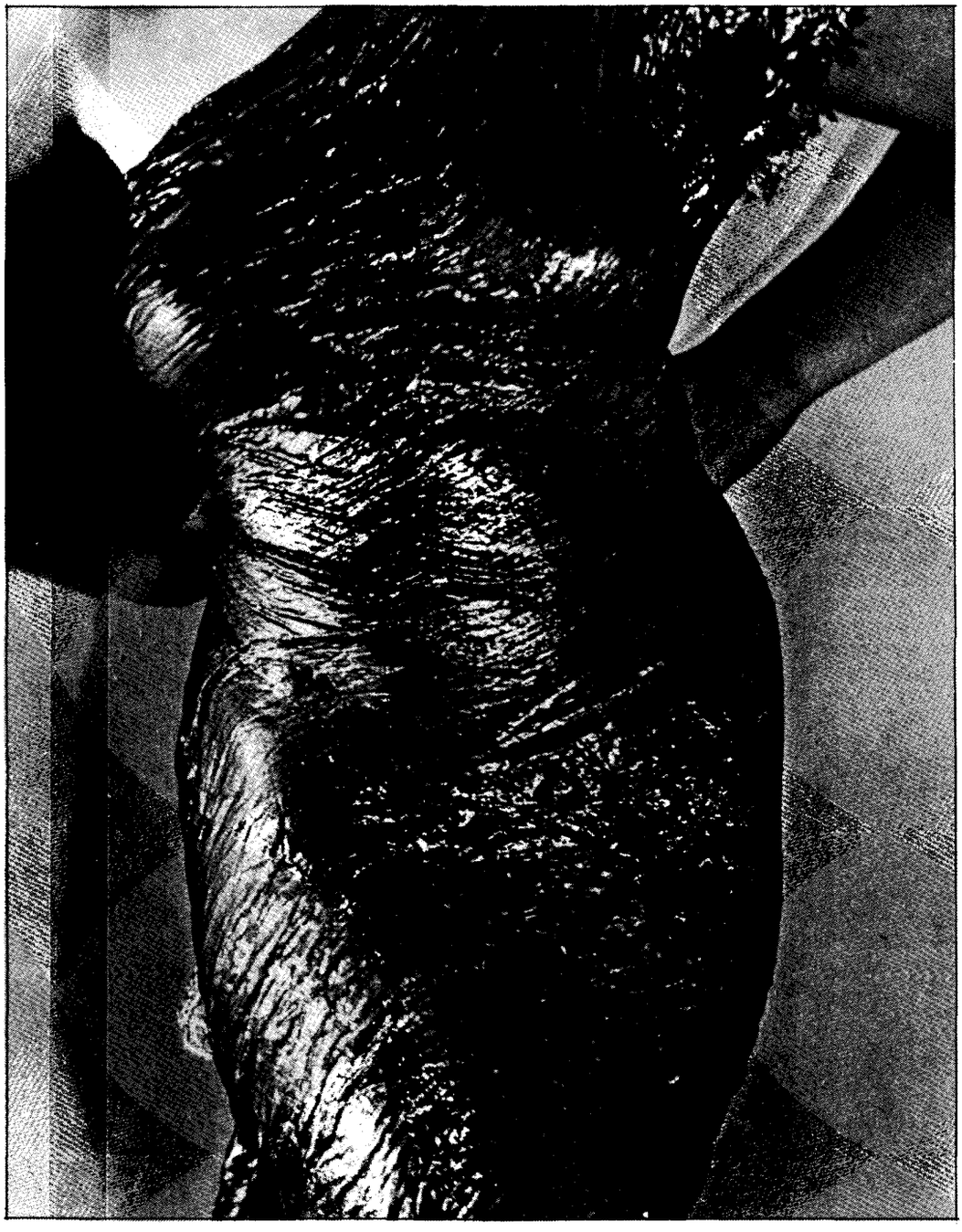
Charlotte Du Cann looks back at Man Ray's fashion

Man's Eye View



In the 1990s our attitude towards materialism and personality is changing radically. And nowhere is this change more manifest than in the decline of fashion magazines, which have always depended on the heroic status of the celebrity and the desirability of earthly goods and chattels.

As the decade turned on the catwalk in a blaze of white tracksuits and crystal pendants, it soon became obvious that it would need more than a superficial switch of clothing to confront the changes ahead. For any transformation, whether personal or collective, a review and a reassessment of the world is necessary. To face any future, you first have to divest yourself of the past.

Although it may appear to be a strange moment for an exhibition on fashion, such as the *Man Ray In Fashion* exhibition that is currently running at the Barbican Centre, or the recent retrospective of Cardin at the V&A, in fact it is perfect timing. It is both revealing and sobering to look with new eyes at the period when consumerism and the star system all began, with the rise of magazines and the portraiture of the grand and glamourous 'in-crowd' in the Paris and New York of the 20s and 30s.

Man Ray, the American painter and photographer, was one of the principal engineers of image to the modern world. Although Ray considered himself principally an artist, he photographed widely for magazines such as *Vogue* and *Bazaar* and eagerly embraced the possibilities for photography in the new mass market (including shooting advertisements for Wrigley's chewing gum and Pond's cold cream).

He bridged the gap between an exclusive *avant garde* and a greedy free market which, if it was financially rewarding, was also revealed as a deeply uneasy alliance. The vision of the individual was then, as now, constantly challenged by the needs of commerce.

'Extraordinary results were expected of me,' Man Ray noted. 'But I soon discovered that editors were more interested in using my name than in a new idea or presentation. If they expressed hesitation as to the advisability of using one of my far-fetched works, and asked for a reduction in my fee, I replied to soothe my hurt vanity that in that case the fee would be double.'

But it was a Mephistophelian pact. As the magazines gave the artists their fortune, they also gave them their fame. The earliest glossy pages are filled with the artist as celebrity, wearing strange clothes, attending magical balls. They conferred on them a public status which had hitherto only been afforded to aristocracy.

This is well reflected in Man Ray portraits: the new elite stare vainly and proudly for their image-maker. And there appears nothing apologist or *demi-monde* about their *modus vivendi*. In one of the most telling portraits in the exhibition, Denise Poiret poses alluringly in her husband's dress 'Mythe', made of peacocks' feathers, with a Brancusi sculpture in the background. Art, fashion, beauty and privilege are tied up in one.

This is continued in his fashion pictures. We are a long way away from Next, the democracy of style, and the Japanese label suit. Fashion here is grand frocks made out of grand fabrics worn by women who looked as if they

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lived in very grand style. This world is very straightforward. Its subtext is simple. If you are rich and clever you wear a gown by a couturier: in this case, Mainbocher, Schiaparelli or Poiret.

But if this exhibition merely revealed fashion as privilege it would be saying nothing new. As it is, there is something deeper and more disturbing in its presentation for the modern viewer. If these women are well-adorned, their faces are like masks, expressionless as Greek statues. They have no soul, no breath of life. This exhibition highlights one of the most unpleasant aspects of modernism: its depersonalisation of the human, specifically the female form.

Man Ray worked with the surreal image, rationally and

mechanically taking apart the whole and experimenting with its separate components like a scientist. Although his surrealist techniques have been praised for their irony and their cleverness in the canons of photography, seeing them now in this familiar context you are reminded not of their innovation but of their palpable dislike and disregard for women, particularly their physicality.

Women in these pictures are either trussed up in some expensive silvery gown like a brilliant possession, or their bodies are dismembered, disembodied and distorted. They appear like broken bits of doll, like some frozen disturbing muse: Lee Miller's lips float in empty space, a model is sawn in half, a stone mask is superimposed on a face, a torso is bound up with string, an arm weighed down with bracelets. The line or the shape of the dress always takes more importance than the wearer.

In these meticulously detailed and well-lit photographs, the feminine principle is reduced to the role of fetish. It is an object to be feared and controlled, kept reasonably out of the way. Even in a culture that can admire a misogynist like David Lynch, this crude treatment of femininity is quite shocking. This reveals how far we have begun to accept the 'feminine' values of receptivity, creativity, intuition and sensuality. And indeed how far we have begun to move away from a strictly hierarchical, masculine perception dominated by the structures of Western thought.

In one sense, we have come full circle in our perception of fashion. Contemporary glossy magazines have forsworn any egalitarianism in their portrayal of fashion. Very expensive clothes are for very rich people. End of story. As the buses go past with full-length portraits by today's 'in' photographer, Herb Ritts, advertising Gap clothes, we register not the sports clothes (which are unremarkable) but the fact that these are portraits of some kind of modern elite: an elite that has assumed its position in the same manner as Man Ray, by its talents, rather than its birth.

But in another sense these fashion portraits are completely different. The clothes are the clothes worn by everyone, they do not flaunt their privilege, nor do they put any emphasis on outside glamour. The sitters look like human beings, not like exotic creatures. The cult of the glittering ego, that display of personality so brilliantly and darkly caught in its ascendant by Man Ray, is now disappearing fast.●

Circus Fantasies

Chris Orr's show *Many Mansions: A Travelling Circus* at the Royal Festival Hall on the South Bank until March 3 is a triumphant celebration of the survival of an individual imagination in the face of fashion, the teaching treadmill and bureaucratic banality. It is also hugely enjoyable and very funny.

In spite of a well-established reputation – his work is in many public collections and he teaches at the Royal College of Art – Chris Orr found that he was unable to interest any official organisation in mounting a retrospective of the last 10 years of his work – etchings, lithographs, drawings and paintings. Nothing daunted, he set up a touring show of his own that will be on the road until 1992.

Chris Orr's work is the antithesis of the 'something to go with the sofa' school of printmaking that dominates the commercial art market. Yet his insistently figurative, narrative and distinctively low-life approach does not conform to the tastes of high-art.

Technically, some of these prints are revolutionary, but the immense skills learned from 30 years of drawing, etching, inking, rolling and printing are always at the service of the idea. Every picture tells a story, and Orr has long exploited the close link between the medium of the printed image and of the printed word. The accumulative narrative is the artist's own story, as a teacher, as a father, as an observer of the contemporary world, and as the victim of his own fantasies and desires. His worldview is highly individual, yet it is an entirely recognisable picture of the tacky, sensuous and chaotic society in which we live. Picturing our dreams, and revelling in the surrealism of social reality, Chris Orr makes genuinely popular art.●

Robert Hewison

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Hidden Agenda (15)

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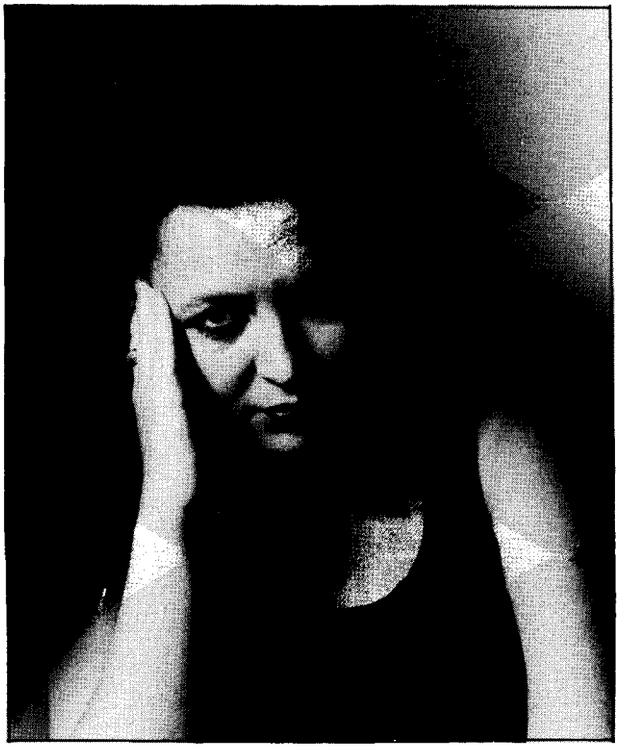
Suzanne Moore



Private pain and public morality

Deviant Laws

'If a man wants his scrotum sandpapered in the privacy of his own home, is it anyone else's business?' asked Nick Cohen, earnestly in *The Independent* recently. He was referring to the jailing just before Christmas of eight men for what the appropriately named Judge Rant described as 'degrading and vicious' sexual activities.

In other words, if a precedent is set by this case then the answer to the question posed by Nick Cohen is 'Yes'. What may at first appear to be an entirely private if peculiar activity is in fact subject to public jurisdiction – the law. This particular case was disturbing, not for the shock-horror headlines about a sadomasochistic torture group which dominated the headlines but for the implications it has as a civil liberties issue.

I would not actively encourage grown men to go around nailing each other's genitals to bits of wood. Yet I would defend their right to do so. Indeed many of the details of this case are so unpleasant to so many people that they have clouded the political issues that such a prosecution throws up. It is doubly important therefore to get the details right, to be sure what these men were and were not doing.

A group of men met regularly to engage in sadomasochistic sex sessions. This involved beatings, genital torture, sex with animals as well as the use of drugs. Fifteen men were given sentences ranging from conditional discharges to four and a half years imprisonment. Eight of them were jailed for what the judge deemed to be beyond the limit of 'acceptable behaviour in civilised society'.

But the point is they were not forcing or coercing people into doing things they didn't want to do, nor were they making a profit from their activities. No harm was caused to anyone but themselves and none of the injuries inflicted resulted in hospital treatment. The average boxing match would be far more likely to result in long-term injury than anything that happened here.

So why was the case brought in the first place? No member of the public had complained. What had gone on happened in private. It was only because the police had got hold of a video the group had made that the case went to court. The hackneyed phrase 'even hardened detectives were sickened by what they saw' was trawled up once more. Have you ever heard of a case where these mythological creatures, these anonymous hardened detectives, are not sickened by evidence of one kind or another?

Usually, though, these unelected arbiters of morals are not allowed to go forward with such completely unnecessary prosecutions. It is only because the behaviour that occurred here was between homosexuals that such a case could even be considered. Clearly the law in this area is inconsistent.

Now your idea of a quiet night in may not involve inviting a few friends around and cutting their penises with surgical scalpels, but the issue here is one of *consent*. Although this may well be distasteful to the average person, it didn't cause harm to anyone else. Is it any more disgusting than deriving pleasure from dressing up in stupid outfits and riding around the countryside in order to encourage a pack of dogs to rip apart a wild animal? And more mundanely, is sending any of these men to prison really going to stop them or anyone else doing this kind of thing?

It's like a sick joke. Question: where do you send a bunch of homosexual sadomasochists for punishment? Answer: to an all male environment where S&M relationships have been institutionalised to a sublime degree. More seriously though, this case where private and consenting behaviour between adult homosexuals has become an imprisonable offence, makes a mockery of what passes for consent in many rape cases. Only a few weeks ago a rape case was dismissed because a 15-year old girl had agreed to go for a walk with a man. He violently raped her, but saying 'yes' to going for a walk was, according to the judge, tantamount to saying 'yes' to sexual intercourse.

In other words when a heterosexual woman says 'no' she really means 'yes', but when a homosexual man says 'yes', the law says that is just not good enough. Homosexual men are not allowed to perform acts of violence on each other, even when both parties consent, while the law repeatedly stands by as heterosexual men beat the shit out of women in a definitely non-consensual way.

If the law is to start being used, as it is increasingly, to prosecute individual and private activities, all of us have cause for concern. Spanking, whipping, scratching, biting, piercing can all be construed as acts of violence, yet they are all sexual activities that many people have indulged in. That harmless love-bite could easily count as an assault, you know.

Most (heterosexual) people assume that the law has no right to poke its nose behind the bedroom door, that their sexuality is somehow beyond public discussion. Unfortunately homosexuals have always known different and would quite sensibly prefer public money to be spent on prosecuting 'queer-bashers' rather than cases such as these. Yet such cases depend on a clustering of moral outrage – homosexuality equals perversion equals paedophilia equals murder – that may start in the tabloids but in this instance was reinforced by the judiciary.

The organisation Liberty (formerly NCCL) has suggested that part of the problem is that we don't have a bill of rights, which in some ways would give a less confusing account of freedom of expression and principles of privacy. Instead we have the likes of Judge Rant rattling on about 'brute homosexual activity' and literally making it up as he goes along. These days you don't have to be a sadomasochist to know that there may be a thin line between pleasure and pain; but it's not as dangerously thin as the one between private lives and public morality.●

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Post-Thatcher Blues

From Paddy Ashdown, leader of the Liberal Democrats

Having spent more than 11 years willing Mrs Thatcher to leave Downing Street, there is more than a little irony in the fact that so many opposition politicians now want to believe that nothing has changed now that she has gone. The only people they have convinced are themselves.

Indeed, there is more than irony in this; there is a profound and damaging miscalculation. The interview with Gordon Brown (*MT* January) was a sad reminder of Labour's inflexibility and lack of imagination. The more things change, the more Labour will say that they stay the same. I can understand Labour's vested interest. To put it in headline terms, if you put sterling into the ERM, abolish the poll tax and remove Mrs Thatcher, what remains to Labour?

If the next election is to be fought by two other parties whose main claim is that they are different from what they were (the Conservatives are no longer ruled by Thatcher, Labour is no longer socialist) then it will be an open contest as to who is the more convincing. And both will be stuck selling what is, on the bottom line, a negative message – negative about their opponents and negative about themselves. Labour will be hard-pressed to explain what Brown calls the 'real, ideological divide'. It wanted to run on the 'quiet life after Thatcherism' ticket; but you can't get much quieter than John Major.

At its most successful, Thatcherism's achievement was to force all of us to think. At once, it was hugely unpopular yet significantly dominant. For far too many, Thatcher's departure is a good excuse to put the mental processes back to bed and hope in vain that life is going to return to a pre-Thatcher normality.

So where does this leave the balance of British politics? The jury is still out on John Major. While he has certainly appeared to move from Thatcherism, it is not clear what he is moving towards. In many ways, he is doing to the Conservative Party exactly what Peter Mandelson did to the Labour Party after 1987; going through the list of negative factors working against his party and hoping to neutralise them. Yet he is inevitably trapped between this objective and his inheritance, sustained by those who voted for him in the leadership contest.

This, surely, is the moment when Britain needs clear leadership. The departure of Mrs Thatcher, and the Conservative revival in the opinion polls, argues that it is timely for others to put forward a positive agenda which is oriented towards the future. She has unblocked the arguments, particularly on Europe and democratic reform.

The new agenda will celebrate Britain's future in an integrated Europe; it will work through the arguments for democratic and constitutional change and for a bill of rights; it will resolve the conundrum of how to stop individualism descending into selfishness and greed by a strengthening of citizenship; it will address the weaknesses of Britain's economy and education system; it will learn to safeguard our precious environment; and it will tackle the economic and social divisions that beset our society.●

Red For Go

From Allan Todd, a part-time lecturer in soviet history

The collapse of stalinism in the east has thrown socialist ideology in the west into chaos, as Eric Hobsbawm has observed (*MT* October); and now, following the fall of Thatcher, two British consequences of this collapse can clearly be seen.

Firstly, as John Lloyd has noted (*MT* October), Neil Kinnock has continued to use the impact of Thatcherism to finally achieve what Gaitskell and Crosland failed to do. Under Kinnock, there has been a relatively speedy revisionalist elimination of socialism from the Labour Party, thus finally ending the intellectual and political dichotomy present within the Labour Party since its creation. The long-term tension between socialism and social democracy has been resolved by the transformation of the Labour Party into a classical west European social democratic party.

Secondly, with sad irony, while Kinnock was capitulating to Thatcherism by ditching all remnants of socialism in order to accept the 'free' market, both in Britain and as enshrined in the Treaty of Rome and the single European market, Thatcherism itself was already encountering resistance outside parliament to its divisive and uncaring policies. These tensions became so serious that Thatcher herself was forced to resign; but one consolation for her, however, is that she feels she has seen the fulfilment of one of her ambitions – the wiping of socialism from the British political arena.

Certainly, as Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques have observed (*MT* December), there is now no dynamic radical (let alone socialist) alternative to Thatcherism. The Kinnockite social democratic Labour Party has become a party without any clear vision of an alternative future, its purpose being now to support a less harsh version of the system, not to transform it. The most immediate effect of such a change has been to cause large numbers of local activists to stay away from meetings, or even to resign.

Yet it is precisely now, more than ever, with so much of socialist philosophy and practice in disarray, that socialism need to be kept alive, developed and advanced. There exists a real need for a socialist party, based on the assessment and retention of the best of the authentic socialist tradition, and with a clear vision of where it wants society to go.

The creation of such a party is an urgent task, and is best served by the Communist Party remaining in existence, in order to contribute to the development of radical socialist policies, and to play a leading role in promoting socialist unity. Out of this could come the formation of a new, radical Socialist Party.

Such a development offers the best hope for the politics and people of Britain in the 1990s and beyond, into the 21st century. Despite the problems of so-called socialism in the east, western capitalism has no democratic or humane solutions to the economic and ecological dilemmas of eastern Europe and the third world or, ultimately, of western Europe. The choice for humanity will continue to be, as it has always been, between a democratic and dynamic socialism or the barbarism of the 'free' market and its privatisations.●

Boys' Own

Nicholas Lezard's description of Martin Amis and Ian McEwan (*MT* January) as overhyped and over-paid aging brats, was accurate, as far as it went; but that was only a short distance. Lezard misses the central point – why were these particular writers so massively hyped in the first place?

The answer is an old and obvious one. In this country, Amis and McEwan – white, heterosexual, middle-class Englishmen – still exemplify the mainstream, from which the best writing rarely comes. Lezard didn't mention Julian Barnes, whose detective novels, published under the name Dan Kavanagh, are excellent; but, seduced by the dream of being a European intellectual, Barnes also churns out such would-be novels of ideas as *Flaubert's Parrot* and *A History Of The World*....

Compare these, together with Amis's execrable, self-parodic *London Fields*, or McEwan's derivative *The Innocent*, to examples of the real thing – Milan Kundera when he's on form, Margaret Atwood, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Primo Levi, Italo Calvino – and the superficiality of the English writers is simply embarrassing.

The extent to which Amis, McEwan and Barnes have hogged the limelight is demonstrated by Lezard's comment that Thatcher has 'presided over the disappearance' of the British novel. In the last ten years, we have produced such writers as James Kelman, William McIlvanney, Alasdair Gray, Jeanette Winterson, Jenny Diski, Hanif Kureishi, and Deborah Levy, just for starters. Our fiction is at least as healthy now as it has ever been.

Amis, McEwan and Barnes are by no means poor writers, though their recent books have scarcely been their best work. But, by the nature of who they are, they fill up space that should be taken by writers at least as good as they. Long feature articles and reviews are devoted to them, while writers considered to be marginal – anyone regional, anyone ethnic, women who aren't bland and conventional – are shunted off onto the sidelines. Any article about the 'brat pack' in *Marxism Today* should address this problem, rather than treating their rise and fall as synonymic with that of British writing as a whole.●

Rhoda Watnik, Berkhamsted

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Moral Majorities

Amidst all the debate (*MT* December) over what John Major's post-Thatcherism might entail, one noticeable absence has been any consideration of what it will mean for family policy and for sexual politics. In the closing months of the Thatcher government, single-parent families, divorce and working mothers had all been foregrounded as issues needing urgent attention, and on the last in particular we could detect evident strains between different strands on the right.

Under the new leadership, these questions have all receded, but they will undoubtedly return, as will other sexual and familial issues. How Major will react will depend on a number of factors, ranging from the cost to the exchequer to the effects it might have on constructing a winning electoral bloc for Conservatism and disrupting Labour's relationship with traditionalist sections of its own voters.

But in this complex of calculation, Major's policies will be no different from the those of the Thatcher government. Beatrix Campbell (*MT* December) suggests that Thatcher sympathised with Victoria Gillick and 'always supported repressive sexual legislation'. But, whatever Thatcher's personal views, her government ensured that under-16 contraception remained available, just as it defeated efforts to lower the abortion time-limit below 24 weeks or to allow parents to withdraw their children from sex education.

Certainly, with Clause 28 and measures on 'family values' in sex education and obscenity, the Thatcher government pursued a moralist agenda. But it has been a very partial one and it would be a great shame if the myth current on both left and right that Thatcherism is Britain's moral majority should be reinforced by a writer who in her book *The Iron Ladies* was instrumental in showing us that the Conservative Right and moral crusades are not the same.●

Martin Durham, Birmingham

Full Marx

What a brilliant article by Susan Strange (*MT* January). Well done: at last, a writer who brings marxism to today, with a clear analysis of the movement of technology as the major determining factor in political consciousness. (At least at the level of the state and multinational interaction.)

Is this the beginning of the long-awaited (by me, if nobody else) rehabilitation of marxism? And who will move to the next level to discover the post-modern basis of class divides which reflects the post-modern technological changes?●

M Weiss, Hove

Peak Viewing

Suzanne Moore (*MT* December) correctly quotes our research when she says that tv viewing appears to have peaked sometime in the mid-80s and since then has been down by, on average, around 1.25 hours per week.

She is also right, according to our time-use data, when she speculates that away-from-home activities are on the increase; we reckon that, on average, people now participate in one more such activity per week than they did in 1985/6.

But what does this signify? The impact of hotter summers, an increase in car ownership, an intolerance of each other amongst household members? Probably all of these factors. However, in addition, it just might indicate the beginning of the end of the 'indifferent' society. Affluence, education and above all else experience may be conspiring as agents of major social change.

In particular, the experience of a population which for 30 years has been watching up to 30 hours television per week (and which in general they claim not to rate highly, according to the British Association of Research Broadcasting programme appreciation scores) may be changing their outlook on life. A jaded population may be beginning to think that there are other, and better, things to do with its time than to watch tv.●

Bob Tyrrell, managing director, The Henley Centre for Forecasting

Famous First Word

I can't help taking the opportunity to comment on your claim to fame in coining the term 'Thatcherism'. Surely, if this is true, you have in fact increased the importance of personality over ideas and policy, helping the Tories to convince the public that a change of government has occurred.

In reality, they are still in power, and should you not feel rather ashamed for having helped them cling on?●

Stephen Newton, Student Liberal Democrats, Salford

Ed: To our knowledge, the first use of the word 'Thatcherism' was in an article by Stuart Hall which appeared in Marxism Today's January 1979 issue. We would be interested to hear of any earlier examples of its use.

Closed Book

And there was I thinking that nowadays the Communist Party understood all about the market. Yet in January's issue I find a review by Malcolm Rutherford of *About Turn*, the record of the CPGB's debate in 1939 on whether or not to label the second world war imperialist. I probably differ from most *MT* readers in thinking that the eventual decision to do so was right, although for entirely the wrong reasons.

But, as a labour historian, my prejudices are not about to be challenged or confirmed by *About Turn*. Why? Simple. The price – £34.95 is absolutely outrageous. One is almost tempted to suggest that the publisher would rather people did not read it.

Whatever happened to glasnost? I suppose there is always a high price to pay for honesty.●

Keith Flett, London

MT Thinking

If the Communist Party really winds itself up (*MT* December), would you please all come and join the Labour Party? I think a sudden inrush of self-criticism would be most welcome. At least inside the Labour Party you would provide an alternative perspective to the people who shout loudly and think little, or those who neither shout nor think.●

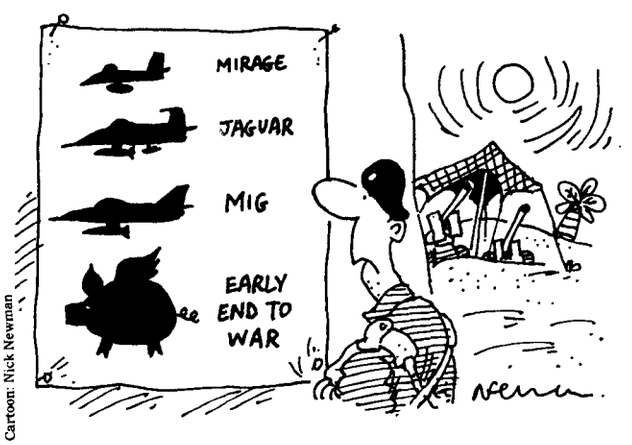
Stephen Jarvis, Manchester

Rest In Peace

In Martin Jacques' leader (*MT* January), he described Margaret Thatcher as the 'most dominant peacetime prime minister this century'. During her period in power, Thatcher fought a war with Argentina and took British troops into the Gulf; she sanctioned the American bombing of Libya, saw nothing wrong with South Africa's apartheid regime and kept quiet when American troops invaded Grenada and Panama.

Perhaps we need to redefine the term 'peacetime'?●

John Bissett, Tyne and Wear



Cartoon: Nick Newman

Insightful Title

Why not call *Marxism Today* 'Eyes Left'? That does not equivocate about its correct direction, and it reminds us that the fight for a more caring, more equitable and fairer society will need a little discipline on the way.●

John Walton, Banbury

Editorial Note:

We welcome your letters to add to discussion. Please send them to *MT* Letters, 6-9 Cynthia Street, London N1 9JF. Brevity means you are more likely to be published. We reserve the right to cut.●

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New World Order

Stone, Paper, Scissors

The New World Order has become a buzz-phrase of our time. **Charles Jencks**, writer on architecture and postmodernism, turns his attention to the post-modern world and the New World Order. He suggests the latter has much in common with the old game of 'stone, paper and scissors'

A year ago President Bush's greatest perceived fault was what he called 'the vision thing' – the inability to find the grand idea to catalyse his administration and inspire the US. Thanks to Mikhail Gorbachev and Saddam Hussein it has now fallen into his lap. Today every travelling statesman who steps off a plane can be expected to clarify the 'New World Order' (or NWO as it might ironically be known) and think-tanks are frantically engaged in figuring out if the phrase has any possible substance. A certain irony is not unwarranted, since the ghosts of defunct NWOs, like the League of Nations, still haunt our memory. That institution failed because it had no effective police power and could not stop Japan attacking China, Italy invading Abyssinia and the USSR attacking Finland. Nation-states, the great creation of the modern world, were superior to a supranational body – has a 'New World Order' really emerged?

The phrase has been in common use since September 6, when James Baker reported to the US congress on his ideas for a 'new order' in the Middle East. His proposal, an acronym like Nato called Meato, was quickly rubbished by senators as 'Gulfo' – a strategy close to Bush's golf-playing brinkmanship of August. Baker admitted 'we have only begun our thinking', and since then other statesmen have adopted the term, especially Gorbachev when he seeks to divert attention from domestic problems. The phrase signals a world system that has been working, however imperfectly, for five months, a new form of government strange enough to have remained partly hidden to its own creators. And there is the hope. For the first time since 1945 there is the opportunity for institutionalising a system that contains national aggression – if only the leaders could appreciate the bizarre mechanism they proclaim so loudly. It has several components. The most obvious is perhaps not a component at all, but the shift in ideology following the end of the cold war – the consensus regarding a market economy and sustained growth. Now most countries understand the importance of the global marketplace and the way piecemeal growth – which can be impressive over 10 years – will be achieved only if there is stability and international law. Utopian revolutions, great leaps forward, jumping economic stages and conquest of neighbours simply do not achieve the results claimed for them in the modern past. Now virtually everybody knows, from the examples of

'The main political reason for the shift to a post-modern world is the extraordinary growth in supranational organisations since the second world war'

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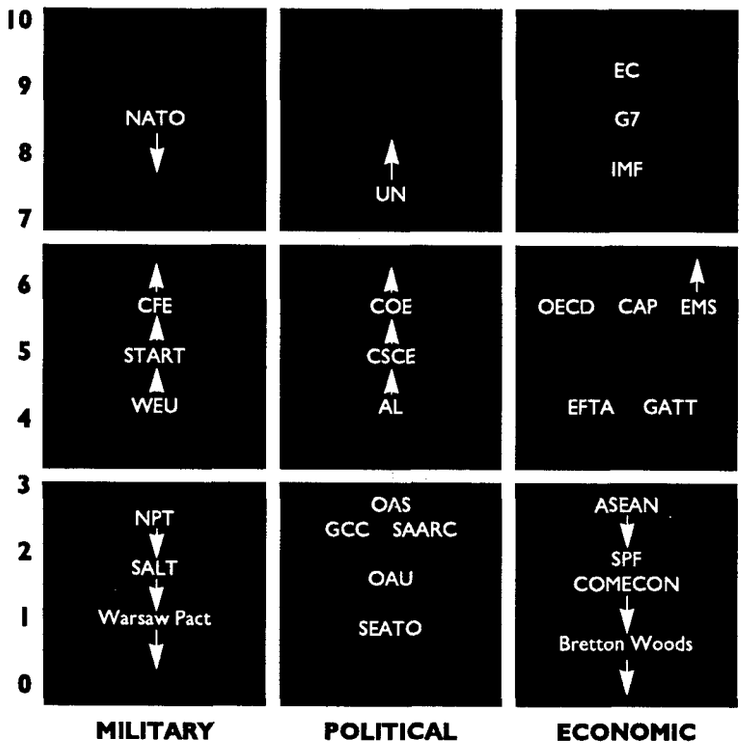
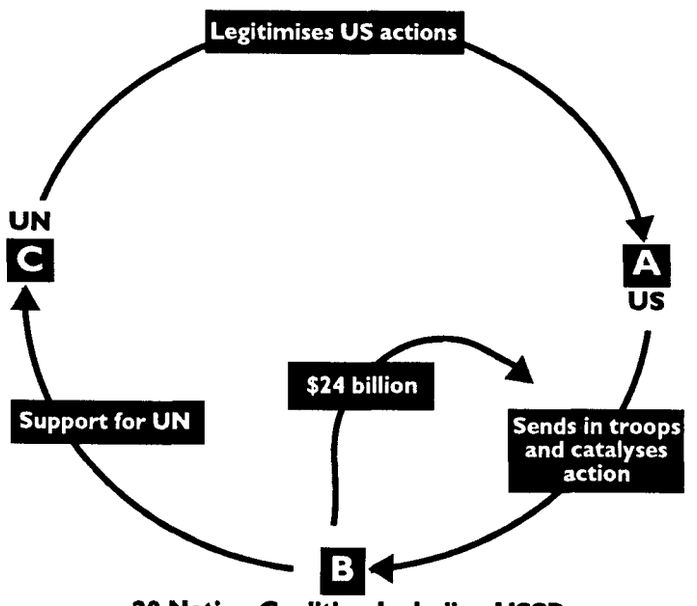
Figure 1: The Power Of The Acronyms
Showing the three basic tiers and those which are rising and falling in influence.



Glossary Of Terms

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
UN – United Nations
EC – European Community
G7 – Group of Seven
IMF – International Monetary Fund
CFE – Conventional Forces Europe
START – Strategic Arms Reduction Talks
WEU – Western European Union
COE – Council of Europe
CSCE – Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
AL – Arab League
OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
CAP – Common Agricultural Policy
EMS – European Monetary System
EFTA – European Free Trade Area
GATT – General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
NPT – Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty
SALT – Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
OAS – Organisation of American States
GCC – Gulf Co-operation Council
SAARC – Southern Asian Association for Regional Co-operation
OAU – Organisation for African Unity
SEATO – South East Asian Treaty Organisation
ASEAN – Association of South East Asian Nations
SPF – South Pacific Forum
COMECON – Council for Mutual Economic Assistance

Figure 2: The New World Order As A Heterarchy
A is over B, B os over C, but C is over A.



Japan, Thailand and the 'Four Little Dragons', that real national wealth is created by a combination of tough but liberal policies, not conquest, nor a command economy. This consensus is so widespread that if it has not created the 'end of history', at least it has killed off the cold war.

The second factor is the long-term trend towards democratisation and its recent acceleration. According to surveys, the number of democracies and quasi-democracies has more than doubled since 1945 – from 47 to 108 of some 167 nations – and more than one-fifth of the world's population – USSR, Eastern Europe and parts of Africa – is trying to become democratic[1]. We intuitively recognise that 1989 was a good year for democracy because change was so visible, but forget that since the early 1970s there has been a general trend towards liberalisation. Partly this is due to the information revolution and global marketplace, and partly to political activism, but whatever the balance of causes the statistics are impressive. Freedom House in New York, which keeps the records and publishes an annual survey of each country's progress or regress concludes, in 1990, that in 20 years there have been: 'some 30 transitions from military or one-party domination to formal civilian, elected rule, as well as 10 reversions to military rule'.

The relevance of this trend for the New World Order is obvious: democracies do not invade each other and, as Immanuel Kant pointed out, tend to keep the peace, so when their number reaches some undetermined 'critical mass' war becomes improbable. Moreover, as Paul Kennedy showed in his epochal analysis *The Rise And Fall Of The Great Powers*, nation-states are becoming weaker by the minute. When he wrote this in 1988 there were five 'great' powers, none of them omnipotent – China, Japan, the EEC, the Soviet Union and the US. And that is even more true today.

The debt-ridden United States only looks bright relative to the lights going out in the communist world, and although it is called the last great 'superpower', economically – the basis for real power – it is more an 'impotentate'. After the second world war it dominated the global economy accounting for some 44% of world trade; today it has slipped into the low 20s and in the not too distant future it is likely to reach its 'natural' level of 16%. These statistics suggest another emergent truth: nobody controls a dominant share of the world market – everyone is now interdependent, or more to the point *dependent* on foreign markets. The New World Order is emerging from this fact as much accidentally as by design, because the formerly 'great powers' must now form coalitions to achieve their ends, and this means negotiation and compromise.

This leads to the basic confusion con-

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cerning the NWO: now that the balance of terror between the US and the USSR has ended, what will replace the formerly stable bipolarity? Arguments favour either a multipolar net of countries acting together, or the unipolar action of the US, first to send troops into Saudi Arabia. Before facing this question there is a bigger historical point to be made.

As Paul Kennedy argues in his study of power, significantly subtitled *Economic Change And Military Conflict From 1500 To 2000*, the nation-state was the most fundamental creation of the modern era, which most historians date to the Renaissance and the collapse of the huge medieval empires. Nations and nationalism were the twin products of modernity and we are seeing the slow eclipse with the rise of the post-modern world. This may sound improbable at the moment, given the recent outburst of national feeling in the Baltic states and Soviet (dis)Union, but the question is whether these events constitute the larger world trend. I doubt it, for various reasons.

One of these is mentioned by Kennedy – the inherent chaos created by the modern system of national sovereignty: 'The international system (of the past five centuries), whether it is dominated for a time by six Great Powers or only two, remains anarchical – that is, there is no greater authority than the sovereign, egotistical nation-state'. Egotism? Eight selfish nation-states with nuclear bombs, or 30 in three years time operating like Saddam Hussein, will not make nationalism a defensible proposition. There are well-known reasons why the strength of the nation-state is declining, but above all because its size is both too big and too small to deal with current problems – world pollution, the mass migration of population, global recession and so forth. Large economic areas, such as the EC, and smaller regional economies such as that of Los Angeles, are chewing away national sovereignty from both ends of the spectrum. Multinational corporations and global communications may soon finish off the meal.

However, the main political reason for the shift to a post-modern world is the extraordinary growth in supranational organisations since the second world war. Again this is not the result of some grand design, but the consequence of thousands of limited agreements between different nations – multinational treaties and negotiations such as Start (for nuclear weapons reduction), or exclusive trading clubs such as G7 (the Group of Seven) or political fraternities such as the OAS (the Organisation of American States, founded in 1948).

Gerald Segal's *Guide To The World Today* lists 100 such acronymic bodies while David Held, in a article titled *The Decline Of The Nation State*, mentions no less than 4,980. He shows that 'Intergovernmental organisations' such as Nato have grown from 123 in 1951 to 365 in 1984, and 'International non-governmental organisations' have multiplied over the same period from 832 to 4,615[2]. To Thatcherites it will sound horrific, the runaway growth of *homo bureaucraticus*, the cancerous spread of international quangos whose number, if we study the figures, doubles every 10 years. If this keeps up by the year 2050 nation-states will disappear because they won't be able to afford the perquisites for all the mandarins.

However, the bright side to this growth is that it checks, dampens, or in a phrase which has caught on about Germany, 'ties down' the nation in a web of commitments. Here, even Margaret Thatcher, Paddy Ashdown and the Labour Party agreed, was an important role of the EC. It will, in the words of a senior official in Bonn, transfix Germany, 'just as Gulliver was tied to the ground by the Lilliputians'. Already some of its sovereignty is lost to the European Parliament and Nato, as well as countless lesser bodies, but the strongest snare will be the Common Market. This, if fully forged as Mitterrand wishes, will keep the German Gulliver passive and a willing friend of the remaining 11 Lilliputian states.

The acronymic net is an important part of the New World Order, but the question is – how does it work effectively? In general, 4,980 alliance and treaties *do* restrain spontaneous egotistical behaviour (and much else besides), but it is the particular organisations to which a nation belongs and their importance – not number – which is the key to stability. To understand this, we need a kind of instant stock report of the acronyms and a measurement of their restraining power: a more sophisticated version of the following chart (Figure 1).

At the top of the market are five organisations – Nato, the EC, G7, IMF and the UN. In terms of binding power these blue-chips rate from seven to nine out of 10, depending on whether the issue is military, political or economic, but there are no international acronyms ranged above them.

In the middle of the market, fluctuating between 4 and 6, are a series of associations ranging from the previously obscure WEU (Western European Union), the political equivalent of Nato and fast rising in stature because of the Iraqi invasion, to Gatt (the 93-member General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade). Then at the base, the underperformers with a rating of 0 to 3, are such things as the Warsaw Pact and Bretton Woods system (defunct since the 1970s and the floating dollar). As these numbers and their fluctuations indicate, the acronyms assert their restraining power through collective psychology and a few legal penalties. Any nation, like Iraq, may disregard and flout the top five acronyms if it wants, but it will then pay a price, usually much too great for a country to afford. So conformity to the strictures of, say, the IMF is the rule. At the bottom of the table are those clubs, like Comecon (the Eastern bloc version of the EC), which most countries have disregarded and even the members have now quit. The club analogy brings out the fact that communist countries which applied for membership used to be 'blackballed' from institutions like Gatt, that indeed their power is more a matter of economic influence than military coercion.

'President Bush nodded eagerly when Gorbachev said: No single country can provide the leadership needed'

Since 1987 and the withdrawal of the Soviets from Afghanistan the big acronym that negotiated this settlement – the UN – has been rising steadily in power. It has mediated one conflict after another, such as the long Iran/Iraq war, when one side would not speak to the other. Because of such successes, and now the extraordinary consensus concerning the Kuwait invasion, the UN is beginning to play the role which its founders envisaged in 1945. Not only did the UN Security Council adopt economic and military sanctions against Iraq four days after the invasion, but by December it had passed 12 tough resolutions, the strongest in its 45-year existence. Most importantly, and perhaps *faute de mieux*, it became *the* forum for legitimising counteraction.

Again like a club, its power is primarily symbolic – but the symbolism of a well-observed law. The Arab League and most of the countries of the world only support the US unilateral involvement in the Gulf under a UN umbrella. This amounts to real negative power, the ability to 'contain' America's quite natural inclination to act on its own self-interest alone. President Bush cannot risk a US-led pre-emptive strike against Iraq unless he is prepared to lose the Arab backing and world consensus he himself created through his hectic telephone-diplomacy during August. In effect, through repeated negotiations with the Soviet Union, EC countries, Arab countries, China and Japan, Bush had inadvertently woven a tight web of commitments which tied the US firmly to the ground like Gulliver, with the UN holding most of the cables. The United States and the United Nations have now interacted for five months, building up troops from 28 countries, setting in place a $24 billion funding package, and this virtually ensures that America will not act without the authority of the Security Council.

The longer the tenuous peace remains, the clearer to both sides become the awful consequences of war. To Hussein annihilation; to the West considerable casualties, the destruction of the oil fields in Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, oil at $60 – $100 a barrel, deep world recession, vast pollution, starvation in the Third World and permanent Arab hostility to Israel and its Western supporters. The consequences of continuing the state of tenuous non-war are marginally less awful: the survival of Saddam Hussein and his acquisition of the nuclear bomb. Again this is why the UN may be the only way out. As it passes more and more resolutions

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week after week, and solidifies world opinion against Hussein, then the more sanctions bite and the greater the internal pressure against Hussein.

The underlying structure of the New World Order has emerged stage by stage, without design but as the logical consequence of a militarily strong but economically weak US and the fortuitous truth that world opinion could unite against the clearly despicable act of a minor power. Almost any other invasion wouldn't have produced this structure. It needed a threat to a world resource, oil, a clearly aggressive act, a big enough military threat to necessitate united action, and the personification of evil, against which a consensus could be built. Hussein's onslaught fits each count, and thus a counter-structure was brought into being.

The basement and first storey were put in place on August 6 and 10 when the UN Security Council adopted economic and military sanctions against Iraq and then declared the invasion 'null and void' by a unanimous vote. This, coupled with Bush's telephone diplomacy, set the stage for the Cairo summit of August 11, when 12 of 20 Arab League nations voted for military action against Iraq. Co-operation and consensus increased when 10 days later the UN sanctioned the interception of Iraq's shipping. It became worldwide when Japan, which sits on the fence when it comes to intractable foreign problems, started to open its coffers promising $1 billion foreign aid to the Gulf States.

The second and third storeys of the structure were added on September 10 at the Helsinki summit, perhaps the most crucial stages in the whole construction for they effectively put the US under the UN net for the first time. Here, having produced the emergent system of world government, President Bush backed sagaciously away from directing it too openly. He nodded eagerly when Gorbachev said: 'No single country can provide the leadership needed', and accepted the Soviet Union's help in developing 'a new regional security structure' for the Arab world. Once the USSR and US agreed to act together and under the UN umbrella it conferred operative legitimacy to this organisation. Before this time the US and UK were saying no UN resolution was needed for action; afterwards they tacitly changed their mind and by November 29 – with resolution 678 – they accepted that force could only be legitimised by a UN vote.

The final storeys of the building were the confirmation by the rest of the world of the existing structure; Saudi Arabia and the Kuwait government in exile promised to contribute $12 billion to the international effort, Japan promised $3 billion more, Britain announced it would send men and tanks to the Gulf and 25 countries followed suit. Further resolutions by the United Nations, such as support for an air blockade and release of hostages, have only strengthened the structure. The basic architecture was in place by October and other acronyms such as the IMF, and other nations such as Egypt, just added embellishment.

'It would be a silver lining to Hussein's invasion if it led inadvertently to the first system of world government that worked'

What does this strange building look like? It goes against the habitual view of power structures as overarching hierarchies controlling everything. Hierarchical power is not the only kind of system that works, and in this case the structure is the typical post-modern heterarchy – a logical system best exemplified by the game 'stone, paper, scissors'.

In this game paper beats stone by wrapping it, stone beats scissors by crushing them and scissors beat paper by cutting it; or formally A is over B, B is over C, *but* C is over A (in a hierarchy there is no such loop). In other words, it is both the traditional hierarchy *and* an egalitarian network, a hybrid system which if not pure, is all the more effective and enjoyable to play because everyone can win. The heterarchical structure is enshrined in the US constitution as the 'balance of powers' between executive, legislature and judiciary and it is my argument that just such a form has emerged as the outer structure of the NWO. This is best shown in a diagram (Figure 2).

One virtue of this model is that it answers a question which has exercised so many think tanks: is the new order based on the unilateral action of the US, or the multilateral power of many nations? The structure may act like the proverbial 'hidden hand' as an unintended result of self-interested motives, but it is clearly both unipolar and multipolar. When Kuwait was invaded, the only power strong and determined enough to act was the US, and it sent in troops (A). Then through multilateral negotiations Bush, Thatcher and other leaders brought into being a group of nations (B) who gave their support to the US if, and only if, military action would go under the umbrella of the UN (C). The UN then continued to legitimise the action which it, as a club without military power, could not take. Thus we have a classic heterarchical balance of power between three basic entities, albeit one of them is a coalition of nations and not a formal body. But the truth is the unipolar US cannot act without this multipolar collection and the UN; nor can the other two act without the US, and so on in a continual circle.

Feedback loops guarantee that no institution or collection has supreme power. Have we then slid from the modern world of egotistical nations to the post-modern world of interdependent bodies? Only tentatively. The NWO, while in place and working for five months, would obviously survive neither a violent rift between the USSR and US, nor unilateral action by the US. But it could outlive a war against Iraq, as it is now UN-sanctioned, and be further strengthened, if the military action were conducted with Arab approval. War is bound to be a catastrophe for all sides, but if it occurs then it must be conducted to 'win the peace', that is to cement the NWO in place. This means keeping the USSR and the Arabs behind the consensus, which further entails using the UN as an effective device to settle the Palestinian issue. The logic of the situation has pushed the US towards realising this, even if it continues to deny direct and immediate linkage: a long-term Middle East peace must deal with this issue next.

It would be a silver lining to Hussein's invasion if it led inadvertently to the first system of world government that worked. The longer the crisis continues to solidify the balance of power, the more possible it is to become institutionalised and permanent, especially if people understand that it has worked for five months. In a way it is not too different from the organisation set up 45 years ago within the UN, where the Security Council – dominated by the then five superpowers – was seen as providing the main police force. Because of the cold war this force never became operative and now, with the US as the main military power, it is external to the UN – but still effectively under its sanction. The hope must be that over time and through repeated usage – like many precedents – this relationship would become institutionalised.

This is an opportunity that only presents itself at rare moments in history, when a war is over or about to start and nations have a breathing space to think about larger questions than immediate self-interest. Of course the pressures against a continued consensus are great – the mass migration of populations, the rise of nationalisms in the USSR, the chronic Arab-Israeli dispute, and the increasing divide between the north and south, or First and Third Worlds. In terms of pressures, however, these are countered by many global forces – pollution, population increase, the communication revolution and thousands of multinational bodies and institutions – which know no national boundaries. The verdict is still open and hangs in the balance. What is clear is that world stability now depends on a complex interaction between three basic amalgams – the UN, the US and a collection of other nations. In such a heterarchical system consensus is hard, but as events have shown, not impossible to achieve. In the long term, the tenuous New World Order should be brought, as intended by the world in 1945, within the purview of the United Nations.●

1 For the complex question of which countries are democratic ('free, partly free and not free') see *Freedom In The World 1989-1990*, the annual survey by Freedom House, NYC.
2 For the discussion of supra- and international bodies see Gerald Segal, *Guide To The World Today*, Simon and Schuster, 2nd edn 1988, and David Held, *The Decline Of The Nation State*, in *New Times*, edited by Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques, Lawrence and Wishart, 1989.
This article is abridged from Charles Jencks, *New World View – The Post-Modern Era*, in manuscript, with diagrams by Justin Ageros.

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The Power To Change

There has been a remarkable change in the style and tone of government since John Major became prime minister. Are we witnessing the birth of a new kind of Conservatism? **David Marquand** interviews **Chris Patten**

Chris Patten was appointed chairman of the Conservative Party last November. Previously he was secretary of state for the enivironment and minister for overseas development. He entered parliament in 1979 as MP for Bath. He is 46 and is married with three daughters.

It has been argued that British politics tends to move in cycles, from an individualistic phase to a collectivist phase and back again. In the 40s you had a collectivist phase, the 50s were a more individualistic phase, the 60s collectivist and obviously the 80s were a very individualistic phase. Do you think that we are now moving back into a more collectivist phase?

No. And it's what gave me some encouragement even during the darkest days of last year. I recall the anecdote that Bernard Donoughue tells, of going round Parliament Square during the 1979 election and Callaghan musing about the inevitability of what was about to hit them below the belt. Callaghan saying, there are occasions in politics when there's a tide running against you and whatever you do you're out. Now I have never felt that there was a tide running against the Conservative Party, or Conservative ideas in that sense. There hasn't been the mood for labourism or socialism – whatever that may be in the 90s – that there was for the ideas that Mrs Thatcher and others were articulating in the late 1970s. I don't think there is much sign of intellectual stirrings on the Left to produce that sort of climatic change, nor do I think that there is much feeling in the country that the time has come to go back to big spending, big taxing, big bureaucracy.

What I do think is that if we can find, more successfully than we've been able to in the past, an English rhetoric for what seems to come so naturally to the German Christian Democrats, namely the social market economy, then we're on to a very substantial winner which will, among other things, ensure that John Major is prime minister for rather a long time. I say that because there is a feeling that while we need to continue to apply some of the economic lessons that we've been attempting to learn in the 1980s, there's also a feeling that we need to be more explicit about the social responsibilities that should go with successful individualism. We have to emphasise both the importance of the collective and the community and the need to find ways of using market mechanisms to run community services more effectively without appearing in the process to devalue those services.

Do you think there are, within the political tradition of this country, the moral and intellectual resources to make that kind of Christian Democratic social market rhetoric mean something to British people?

Advertising men would say that we were up against a problem with which they were familiar. If you're selling shampoo, they say, it's extremely difficult to sell it on the grounds that it's both good for clearing up dandruff and makes your hair lustrous. So, to continue an inadequate metaphor, they would say it's inherently difficult to argue a case for the social market economy. People can understand the social bit and they can understand the market bit but they can't see the two together. I don't actually think that's necessarily right, and the challenge is to prove it's not right. After all there are, inherent in patterns of human behaviour, things which underpin what should be a straightforward argument to get across. Hardly anybody, for example, attempts to achieve even the most individualistic thing without having a broader social sense. You climb a mountain because mountains are there, and if you climb a very high one you put a national flag on the top. I think it's a terribly inadequate way of looking at political philosophy to assume such a split between the individual and the collective or the community, because people operate in both ways. I wrote in a widely-remaindered book a few years ago that people in a way express their individualism best in groups larger than themselves, in their family, in their church, their club and their school, and the collective, the social, is important to the working out of your individualism. So that is a fairly fundamental aspect of human behaviour patterns. It doesn't seem to me that it should be impossible for politicians to find a way of encapsulating it in terms of political argument. What may make it more difficult for us in this country is the extent to which political argument was polarised into absurdities and was very often institutionalised into absurdities as well, for example, the way such large sections of industry were nationalised.

Do you think the social market concept that you've just been talking about depends upon individual people accepting in their own lives, in their own behaviour, some kind of responsibility to the community? Can politicians do anything at all to foster this sense of responsibility, or does it lead to a rather awful preachy pie-in-the-sky kind of paternalism which in fact is counter-productive?

First of all it is simply not an area or an issue which any politician can leave alone, for one very obvious utilitarian reason: you have to ask yourself as a politician why it is that every sort of voluntary work organisation in this country has been growing in membership in the last few years except political parties? Now that must tell you something about human impulse, and it must tell you something about the sort of political messages which the established parties have been sending out to people. But secondly, it is difficult to try to mobilise that activity without on the one hand sounding preachy or on the other sounding as though you wish to shuffle off responsibilities which should properly and legitimately be carried by the state, or underpinned by the state. Those are both difficulties for politicians, but I have no doubt that we should try to face up to them.

One way in particular in which governing politicians have to face up to them is by establishing the legitimacy of those organisations in the policy process. I've been in two areas, the environment and overseas development, where non-governmental organisations play, both in provision and in public education, a crucial role. And not to try to involve those organisations without either neutering them or feeling neutered in the process, is quite simply to cut oneself off from the action: and to so crab and confine government that it behaves less

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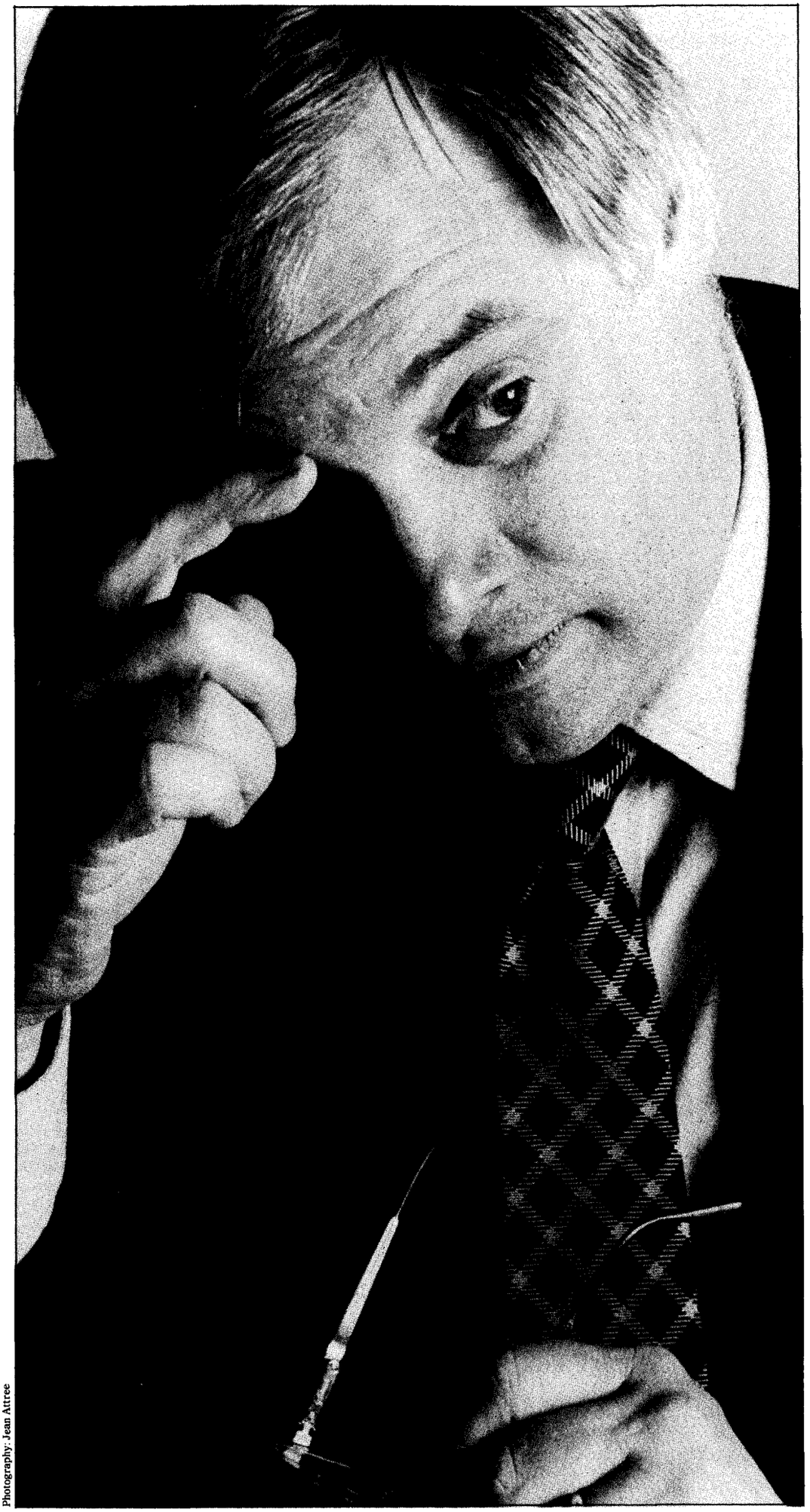

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imaginatively and less effectively than it would otherwise. They are plainly where a great deal of the vitality of our community is. The greatest disappointment I had when I was an education minister for a brief and not particularly glorious period,was that parents weren't already more involved and interested in education. Now we're starting, I hope, to find parents more prepared to come forward and play a part in education.

It seems to me that you are suggesting a political style, perhaps something more than style, which is quite significantly different from that of the Thatcher governments of the 80s. Aren't you asking for a much more consensual style of leadership on the part of government than you've had in the last decade, a much less confrontational style, a much less radical style. It's not just government saying, 'Right, here is our agenda, we're going to smash it through, against the opposition of vested interests', it's government saying, 'Here we've got some thoughts, please tell us what your thoughts are, let's hash them out and discuss them and see if we can find some kind of common ground'.

There's a tremendous amount in that which I'd like to unpick. First of all, I think it would be dangerous and wrong if we were to give the impression either that we had ceased to think radically or ceased to embrace change. Or that we intended to encourage a slide back into soft options, trying to apply butter to problems rather than solve them. I simply don't think that that would be the right way to govern the country and I don't think it would be electorally successful. But we have to establish a rhythm for our radicalism which matches the prevailing mood. I don't think people just want a quiet life and no change, but they want to feel that the government is setting about change in a deliberate and considered way. They feel after, for example, the experiences of which I have some knowledge – I now know more about local government finance than a human being should ever want to know – that we should attempt to convince rather more than we have in the past, and shouldn't rest our case as much as perhaps we have sometimes on assertion. Now that is not to say that we can cop out of change. I don't think that government's just about standing pat, as Richard Nixon once said, I think it's got to be about identifying further changes and there are changes that I'd like to make.

But there is another aspect to your question which I've touched on a bit already. We live in a plural society, in which there are a lot of active, informed non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which aren't political parties. One should attempt to involve them in discussion and debate. Involving them in that discussion may mean you change your mind or adapt your opinions, it may not. I used to say to voluntary groups that I was entitled to a point of view as well, and that, if they were entitled to slag me off, I was at least

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entitled periodically to express my reservations about their point of view. But we shouldn't be so exclusive about policy development or about policy initiative. There are lots of bright ideas out there. Why are we taking environmental issues much more seriously, making them part of mainstream Whitehall management and thinking? Because of what NGOs have done.

Where would you like to see radical change in the new decade?

I think the main areas for us to concentrate on, apart from inflation, are education and training, putting more flesh on what has been said about opportunity. I hope we'll look at the problems of incentives and disincentives lower down the income scale. I hope we'll continue to look at ways in which, without losing the style or even the moral impulse of some great public services, we can use the principles and practices of the private sector to run them better. There's more we can say in the environmental field. But those are the main things. It's a terrific challenge because if we can rise to it, come the next election, we will be able to fight not only on our record but also on our ideas. And find ourselves contesting for power with an opposition which can't by definition have much of a record, and doesn't have any ideas either.

'Power has insidious ways of curtailing one's sensitivities as a politician, starting with the fact that hardly any minister I know has a raincoat'

I was very intrigued by that list. Not long ago I was in a discussion with somebody from the Institute of Economic Affairs and somebody from the Labour Party think-tank, the IPPR, and we were talking about the issues of the 90s. We took some of the ones that you've mentioned, obviously the economy and the environment, but there were two others which all three of us thought were going to be central, neither of which you've mentioned. One was Europe, the other was constitutional and political reform. You don't think that these are areas in which radical thought is necessary, or you don't think they're interesting or important, or what?

I think they're interesting and important, I didn't mention Europe because policy will develop on Europe on foot, as civil servants say, of the work in the Intergovernmental Conferences. My own hunch is that in Europe on both economic convergence and political convergence, we will find ourselves much more in the van than people customarily suppose. Let me give one example of why I think that: there's a wonderful poem by Cavafy, who I think is much the best poet of public affairs, called *Waiting For The Barbarians*, in which the inhabitants of a Greek city state turn up every morning at dawn at the city gates with the keys to wait for the barbarians to arrive, and they fail to show up, and as they go home in the evening muttering disappointedly to themselves, the citizens say, 'It's such a pity, because the barbarians were after all a kind of solution in their way'.

And you were the barbarians...

I think what all of us have experienced in European councils is colleagues waiting for us to put the arguments for prosaicism, as it were, for practicality, and when we are less theatrically exposed they are going to find that they are having to put the arguments themselves. So our alleged intransigence, our cultural inclination to ask the 'Yes, but...' questions, came in very useful if you were from almost any other member state. I think the European issues will resolve themselves with rather less political hassle than a lot of people have supposed. For any of us who've been in government in the 80s, it's increasingly obvious and increasingly the case that you have to make large amounts of policy on the European Community stage.

The other issue which you mentioned was constitutional reform. I think that one starts by asking a Joad-like question, define your terms. If, for example, constitutional reform involves, among other things, trying to establish a more coherent view about the appropriate relationship, and the appropriate structure for that relationship, between local and central government, I totally agree with you. But I don't go much beyond that. I don't think people out there are burning for much more than that. It's an endlessly fascinating subject, particularly for politicians. But I'm not sure it gets them humming with excitement in the Dog and Duck.

I'll come back to them in a minute if I may, but I must pursue you on Europe. After all, Mrs Thatcher would still be prime minister if it weren't for a lot of argument about Europe. So let me put it in a very simplistic way. There has been a view in this country for a long time, going back to the 1950s, that the European Community is essentially an association of sovereign states which co-operate together in certain fields but which retain their sovereignty. In essence it's a sort of free-trade area. There is another view, the prevailing view in the other Community countries, that it is, in some fundamental sense, a supranational organisation moving, in the words of the Rome Treaty, towards an ever-closer union. Now on which side of that divide do you locate yourself, and on which side of it do you think the Major government locates itself?

I would allow the prime minister and the foreign secretary to speak for themselves, but I undoubtedly take the view that the Community is going to evolve into more than it is at the moment. But if you ask me precisely what that 'more' amounts to, I take some refuge in Cardinal Newman, 'I do not ask to see the distant scene, one step enough for me'. I also find it extremely difficult to know what people are talking about when they use expressions like union and quasi-federalism.

Extending majority voting in the Council of Ministers, for example.

There are arguments for doing that, provided you define subsidiarity more closely. I began to find in the Environment Council that there were large numbers of issues on which qualified majority voting wouldn't have caused us very much difficulty, but on the other hand I would have wanted to define what it was that the Community should do appropriately first. There's a real and understandable reservation we have about some of the institutional arguments, precisely because of the institutional longevity which we enjoy here. There is hardly another member state which can point to institutions which have survived so long. Most other member states have seen their own democratic institutions either disrupted by internal revolution or authoritarianism during the last 40 or 50 years, or have been subject to invasion from an external power. And I think that gives us a real and different perception.

But the question is, can our different perception be adapted to their perception, after all they are the majority and we are a minority, or are we going to stick to our different perception come what may, in which case the road ahead may well be rather bumpy?

I think it may be bumpy, but I certainly wouldn't want us to surrender completely our own views about the best way of arranging democracy, and I don't think that any of the others would expect to surrender their own opinions on things which they regard as fundamental. So firstly, I don't necessarily accept your underlying argument that we are inevitably going to find ourselves in a punch-up with others on these matters. Secondly, it does seem to me that we've got some very legitimate arguments to make about institutional arrangements, and even though arguments about sovereignty can sound pretty hollow sometimes – and that's always been the case, it's one of those things which it's frightfully difficult to define in the abstract – nevertheless we have more practical ways of understanding its definitions than a lot of other countries.

How about monetary union? The government is saying the hard ecu is a road towards a single currency, eventually, or maybe, but there must be no imposition of a single currency. That's a very elegant formulation which allows you to keep your options open for a long time to come.

I think you'll find a lot of other people discovering that its elegance covers their positions too.

At the moment the Germans don't seem to like it too much.

We'll see what happens in the IGC. The more people look at the proposals about the hard ecu, the more they seem to comprehend the points that we're trying to make and sympathise with them.

But aren't you going to have to say that the final destination, in your view, is going to be a single currency?

It may be, if that's what people choose.

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And you wouldn't go further than that, you wouldn't say: 'This is what we want it to be. We hope people will choose this'?
No, because that begs so many questions of what else is in the parcel.

Go on.
I hope they'll choose it, which is what you're wanting me to say, but if I hope they choose it, what are the other things that I hope they're choosing as well? What are the degrees of convergence in the labour market between southern Portugal and northern Germany which they're buying?

Can I go back to the other question which we touched on, that of constitutional reform. You said people in the Dog and Duck weren't very interested in this, and if I understood you correctly you said that the area where you thought something important could and should be done might be relations between central and local government, but you didn't really think anything else was terribly interesting and important. What about individual rights? There is now a quite substantial debate, not confined by any means to the Left or the centre Left, but including for example the IEA, which says that part and parcel of the Thatcher revolution of the 80s – which was about empowerment, or at least was sold as being about empowerment – must be the entrenchment of justiciable individual rights in the legal system. Do you have any time for that argument?
I have some time for it as an interesting intellectual proposition. I don't think that it has very much political resonance at the moment. We've empowered people in numbers of ways, both through the extension of ownership and through the extension of rights and choice in the public sector. I don't myself think that we need to seek a bill of rights for the end of this century, but I'm fairly open-minded on the arguments. There is something I suspect you don't take sufficient account of in arguing about institutional reform. At the end of the 1970s, when institutional reform was a live issue both here and in the United States, I can remember going to the United States and people talking about the crisis of the presidency, people writing about the importance of changing the constitution in order to make it possible for the president to govern, and similar broad debates about institutional reform in this country. What those reflected was the fact that government had been inadequate, had failed – in this country most manifestly in relation to trade unions and economic decline. The fact that elections were fought about who governed the country, whether as an explicit constitutional question or in terms of who could best draw up a social contract with the unions, reflected that lack of ability of politicians to govern. The paradox is that two politicians, Reagan and Thatcher, who believe in small government, seem to have made government itself possible again, and to the extent that government has been capable of dealing with issues in the 1980s, then I don't think that institutional reform is going to be as big an item in our in-trays as it was 10 or 15 years ago. Now maybe you're right to say that I'm missing something which is stirring in the shrubbery. I'm not convinced by that.

'There's a feeling that we should be more explicit about the social responsibilities that should go with individualism'

It may not be stirring in the shrubbery, but it might nevertheless be the right thing. It's not always what stirs in the shrubbery that politicians need to do. But let me put the point a slightly different way round. You said a few moments ago that you hoped, and perhaps expected, the kinds of approaches that you've been describing to lead to another, longish period of Conservative rule and that John Major might be prime minister for quite some time...
If we get it right.

I think that's entirely possible myself. We then face a quite interesting question, not stirring in the shrubbery but at a higher sort of level. British politics have worked on the basis that governments are kept on their toes and made accountable to the public through the adversarial party system in which the opposition is quite likely to hold power at the next election through the swing of the pendulum. Now if we do have another Conservative victory in the next general election and maybe, goodness knows, even possibly a fifth one, this would be an extremely long period of one-party rule. We'd be getting almost to a Japanese-type political system. Given our constitution, our political culture, doesn't this have some worrying aspects for you?
It has more worrying aspects if you're a Labour politician.

Obviously it does, but I'm asking you as a Conservative.
What I was saying earlier about the responsibilities of being extrovert, of listening, of seeking to convert rather than assert in one's dealings, for instance with the massive non-governmental organisation sector, is perhaps one reflection of my concern that we should try, if we win, to avoid the arrogance of power. Power has insidious ways of curtailing one's sensitivities as a politician, starting with the fact that hardly any minister I know has a raincoat.

So if ministers don't have raincoats, and they're going to have even fewer raincoats on the hypothesis of another Conservative victory, isn't the question then, might we not need some constitutional changes which will oblige them to have raincoats?
First of all, I don't myself believe that we've seen the end of parliamentary reform. I was Norman St John Stevas's parliamentary private secretary when we set up the select committees, and I regard their development as one of the most important things that's happened in our political life. Speaking as a minister, the most intellectually interesting experiences I've had in parliament have been exchanges with select committees. It is incomparably more useful and interesting to spend two hours answering the questions of a select committee rather than 45 minutes shouting cliches at the opposition, or having them shouted at you. There is more that we'll need to look at in terms of parliamentary reform, and people are starting to ask serious questions about the impact of our working hours on aspirant politicians. It is much more difficult for women to come in to our political structures because of the way we operate. It's outrageous. Secondly, we will need to look at the ways in which we refresh ourselves intellectually in the Conservative Party. We will need to look to ways in which we can build out of the Centre For Policy Studies and the research department here a genuine independent think-tank for the Conservative Party. I've always been a great admirer of the work of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and of the other political academies in Germany, which I think have helped make policy debate more informed and thorough and open than it's sometimes been in this country

Can I ask a last question: you are expressing a view of politics which is quite close in all sorts of ways to christian democracy on the continent. Do you feel this is a rather exotic creed in the British Conservative Party, or do you feel yourself to be in the mainstream?
No, I think I'd regard myself as being in the mainstream.

It's pretty different from Thatcherism, isn't it?
It may be partly a generational thing. If you were to put round the table Volker Rühe and one or two of his colleagues in the German CDU, and Ken Clark, John Gummer, Tony Newton, and others, and me, apart from the fact that they'd probably speak English better, you'd often be hard-pressed to know which was which. Different perceptions about Europe, but partly because we start from different sets of political and personal experience. But I find myself very much at home talking to German Christian Democrats. It does seem to me that with notable effect they've constructed a political philosophy which works and delivers not only in terms of the prosperity which it helps to produce but also in terms of – to use a rather Christian Democrat word – the solidarity which it establishes. The story of Germany since the war, not only in terms of economic miracles, but also in terms of coping with their inheritance and establishing, with our help initially, institutions which are healthy and vibrant, is one of the outstanding success stories of parliamentary democracy anywhere. So I would hope that whatever else the future holds, working closely and successfully with other European politicians like that is at least part of the mix. And if in the process we can learn from them and they perhaps from time to time can learn from us, it's one of the better effects of being a part of the Community.●

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The End Of The Rainbow

There is a widespread assumption on the Left that social movements are progressive.
Anna Marie Smith
takes issue

The strategy of building 'rainbow coalitions' may have been welcomed in the 1980s as a radical breakthrough in socialist politics, but it is now regarded with some suspicion. Feminists, lesbians and gays, blacks, the greens and so on, are returning a mixed verdict on the attempts made within the Labour Party and the trade unions to take on board their demands.

I was particularly struck by the ambiguity of 'rainbow coalitions' during the campaign against Clause 28 three years ago. At a rally in Manchester, for example, many Labour Party and trade union representatives spoke out against the clause. Their presence was especially significant in that Labour's front bench was at that time distancing itself from the pro-lesbian and gay rights position of local government socialists and the party conference. Their speeches, however, were often disappointing. One Labour Party spokesperson declared that we were there to show the Tories that we would fight against their attack on the lesbian and gay community. But she then added: 'and we're also here because of the poll tax'.

The speaker assumed that lesbians and gays who were against the clause were, naturally, also against the poll tax. Her claim rested on a further assumption: politics is basically a struggle between two camps, the 'progressive' movements and the socialists versus the Right. This is the basic assumption which underlies the 'rainbow coalition' strategy. But we were *not* there because of the poll tax, and there were probably many people in the crowd who were Tory voters. Her claim only made their protest seem illegitimate.

The problem with coalition politics lies precisely in these assumptions and it is only by taking a closer look at them from a theoretical perspective that we can suggest alternative strategies. Paradoxically, a discussion of marxist class analysis can provide a useful starting point. It is true that many of the socialists involved in coalition politics within the Labour party and the trade unions have never been greatly influenced by marxism. They are nevertheless reproducing the same sort of reductionism that can be found within the marxist tradition.

It is also true that there are types of marxist thinking which are not reductionist. Where reductionism is practised by marxists, it takes the form of class reductionism. From this perspective, social movements are categorised in terms of class. The movements which are supposed to express the true interests of the working class are considered 'progressive', while the movements which are supposed to express truly bourgeois interests are dismissed as 'reactionary'. In other words, class reductionism predicts the political tendency of each political actor depending on its location in the class struggle. Other perspectives on class within marxism reject this kind of straightforward categorisation of political actors and prediction of political tendencies. Class identity is instead regarded like any other identity: there may be movements in which a shared sense of being a worker is important, but this identity is not taken as a guarantee of a 'progressive' political tendency.

Coalition politics, of course, does not reproduce *class* reductionism. It does recognise the importance of the non-class actors, and does not categorise movements in terms of classes. However, if we consider the form, rather than the content, of class reductionism, the continuities between coalition politics and class reductionism are nevertheless evident. Two theorists, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, suggest that class reductionism should be located in a tradition which had its founding moment in the French Revolution[1]. They describe this tradition as the 'Jacobin imaginary'. Within this way of thinking, the social is conceptualised as naturally taking the form of two all-encompassing camps. The first struggles in this tradition were not class struggles, but the struggles between the 'people' and the 'ancien régime'. In class reductionism, it is likewise assumed that politics is basically a struggle between two camps, and that once we have correctly identified the class nature of every political actor, we can establish its location in the progressive or reactionary camps.

Laclau and Mouffe are not suggesting that the social never appears to us as divided into two all-encompassing camps. At times, we can, and do, represent the social in this way, and for very good reasons. Feminists sometimes represent the social as a singular and all-encompassing opposition between sexists and anti-sexists. This approach allows for the extension of the critique of sexism into virtually every social sphere; from this standpoint, it becomes possible to argue that 'the personal is political', and that because nobody can stand outside this division everyone must take a position vis-a-vis sexism. Laclau and Mouffe insist, however, that the two-camp structure of the social is never given to us as an already-established fact. What we actually have as a starting point for political interventions is a complex array of positions, and multiple, even contradictory oppositions. We experience social relations in terms of a two-camp system only in so far as some actors intervene to create this sense of a singular and all-encompassing opposition. The two-camp system will always be momentary and fragile: at some point, the two camps will dissolve, and the original complexity of social relations will be restored.

The problem with class reductionism, then, is not only its location of political actors in terms of the two fundamental classes. It is also deeply problematic in its presupposition that the social *naturally* takes the form of two all-

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encompassing camps, as if this were the starting point for all political interventions. It really doesn't matter if we come up with new names for the camps involved; as long as we are interpreting social relations in terms of a natural two-camp system, the possibilities for political strategies are severely limited. For if we assume that politics is but a game of 'us' versus 'them', and that we can know in advance every actor's location in one of the two camps, then our political role is quite restricted: we only need to guide our 'natural' allies to our camp, and to speak effectively on behalf of our camp.

It seems to me that coalition politics all too often takes the same form as class reductionism: it is assumed that the new social movements are essentially 'progressive', and that it is the task of socialists to lead each movement to its natural location in a coalition against the Right. New names are used for the two camps, but the same presuppositions, and the same limitations, are involved.

The strategy of building coalitions rests on three assumptions. First, it is assumed that each of the movements in a coalition is homogeneous: differences may be recognised between, for example, the women's movement and the labour movement, but no differences are recognised *within* the women's movement. Second, it is assumed that we already know how to categorise movements as natural allies or as natural enemies. Not every movement is understood as 'progressive': 'rainbow coalitions' do not include the anti-abortion movement, Christian fundamentalists or racist neighbourhood groups just because they are social movements. Other movements, such as the animal rights movement, parents' groups, and football supporters, are not so easily classified. It is nevertheless assumed that we can be fairly certain that some movements will always belong to 'our' side: the women's movements, black struggles, the lesbian and gay movement, the 'greens', the peace movement, and so on.

Third, it is assumed that the actors which are brought together in a coalition are already fully established. Coalition-building usually becomes a matter of tactics, rather than a process in which goals and methods are questioned, and different constituencies attempt to learn from one another. Take, for example, the important initiatives made by some Labour representatives to speak out in support of lesbian and gay rights at the height of the GLC, and during the Clause 28 debates. They often employed phrases and categories used in anti-sexist and anti-racist politics, as if pro-lesbian and gay politics fitted into exactly the same format. Where the adoption of a pro-lesbian and gay position could have involved the development of a whole new approach to the family, gender and sexuality, this valuable opportunity remained largely unexplored.

In my opinion, social movements should not be categorised as natural allies or natural enemies. Social movements are not essentially homogeneous, and it is impossible to predict the political tendencies of the various fragments involved. The statements and strategies of the animal rights movement, for example, are ambiguous. The campaign against the fur trade has developed an impressive critique of consumerism and the fashion industry. This campaign has also successfully mobilised younger people for whom other social movements and party politics may seem irrelevant. However, this critique of consumerism is at times centred on a sexist representation of women consumers as unthinking 'fashion victims', thereby ignoring the complexity of the power structures in fashion and marketing. In some areas, such as northern Canada, the production of furs for the fashion industry is an important component of the local economies of indigenous peoples. Although environmentalists and animal rights groups have made several attempts to support native land claims, the anti-fur trade campaign often demonstrates a lack of concern for the indigenous people's rights.

'Both sides claim to be arguing as feminists. Neither side can be questioned without resorting to damaging name-calling'

In the case of feminism, the reduction of complexity of feminism to a singular 'women's movement', and the categorisation of this movement as naturally 'progressive', can serve to limit the development of feminist debate. The differences within feminism on the issue of pornography and censorship exemplify the fragmented and complex nature of feminist positions. Some women argue that pornography legitimises sexism and actually causes discrimination and physical harm to women, and demand new legislation which would enable women to sue the producers and distributors of pornography. Other feminists argue that sexism is not concentrated to an extraordinary extent in sexually-explicit material and that violence against women should not be explained in terms of a single cause. Instead of new legislation against pornography they demand better resources for the production of non-sexist sexual material, especially sex education material.

It is important to note that both sides claim to be arguing as *feminists*. The intentions of either side cannot be questioned without resorting to damaging games of name-calling and credentialism. What we, the feminists on the anti-censorship side, are trying to show is not that there is only one true feminism, but that an apparently 'progressive' strategy pursued by well-intentioned feminists can actually have an authoritarian effect. We argue that the intentions of the original feminist authors of new anti-porn legislation would be irrelevant to the final wording of these laws and to their application. We have seen that the police, the customs officials and the judiciary already apply existing legislation to lesbian and gay materials, alternative art, and even feminist publications, rather than to mainstream pornography. Even an anti-porn law written by feminists could be used as a weapon against these marginal discourses, without affecting sexist discourse in any way.

The space for this debate between feminists should be kept open. However, in statements by anti-porn Labour MPs such as Clare Short and Dawn Primarolo, and in the resolutions on pornography in the conferences of many trade unions the issue is discussed as if they were the only feminist position. Because we have become so accustomed to thinking about feminism in terms of coalition politics, this assumption of the homogeneity of feminist politics has become a common habit. In this case, and many others, the coalition politics framework can tend to conceal differences and prevent discussion.

Coalition politics fails to address the undecidable nature of social movements: they always involve conflicting positions, rather than homogeneous movements, and these positions cannot be categorised as either democratic or authoritarian outside specific contexts. A break with 'Jacobin' reductionism involves far more than a shift to new actors. It entails a different conceptualisation of politics as an ongoing process of decision-making in which the political character of every position is never taken for granted, and the rules for engaging with conflicting positions are constantly being re-written. In the terms of Homi Bhabha, this approach can be described as the politics of negotiation, rather than the politics of coalition-building[2]. Instead of dealing with movements as if they were homogeneous, and as if they were either natural allies or natural enemies, the plurality of positions within each movement would be recognised. The project of working with the social movements would take the form of an ongoing process of decision-making, as decisions between these conflicting positions would have to be continually taken. Negotiation does not entail the compromising of principles, but a constant re-examination of the criteria for these decisions, and an open process of exchange and education between the negotiating parties. In other words, negotiation does not just entail a recognition of new political actors, but also the negotiability of every identity. The engagement with the social movements has to become a truly equal learning process, rather than a relation between a knowing representative and the represented. Whereas coalitions are established between already constituted identities, negotiation takes place around identity.●

1 Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Verso, 1985.
2 Homi Bhabha, 'The Third Space', in Jonathan Rutherford ed, *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, Lawrence and Wishart, 1990, pp 207-221.

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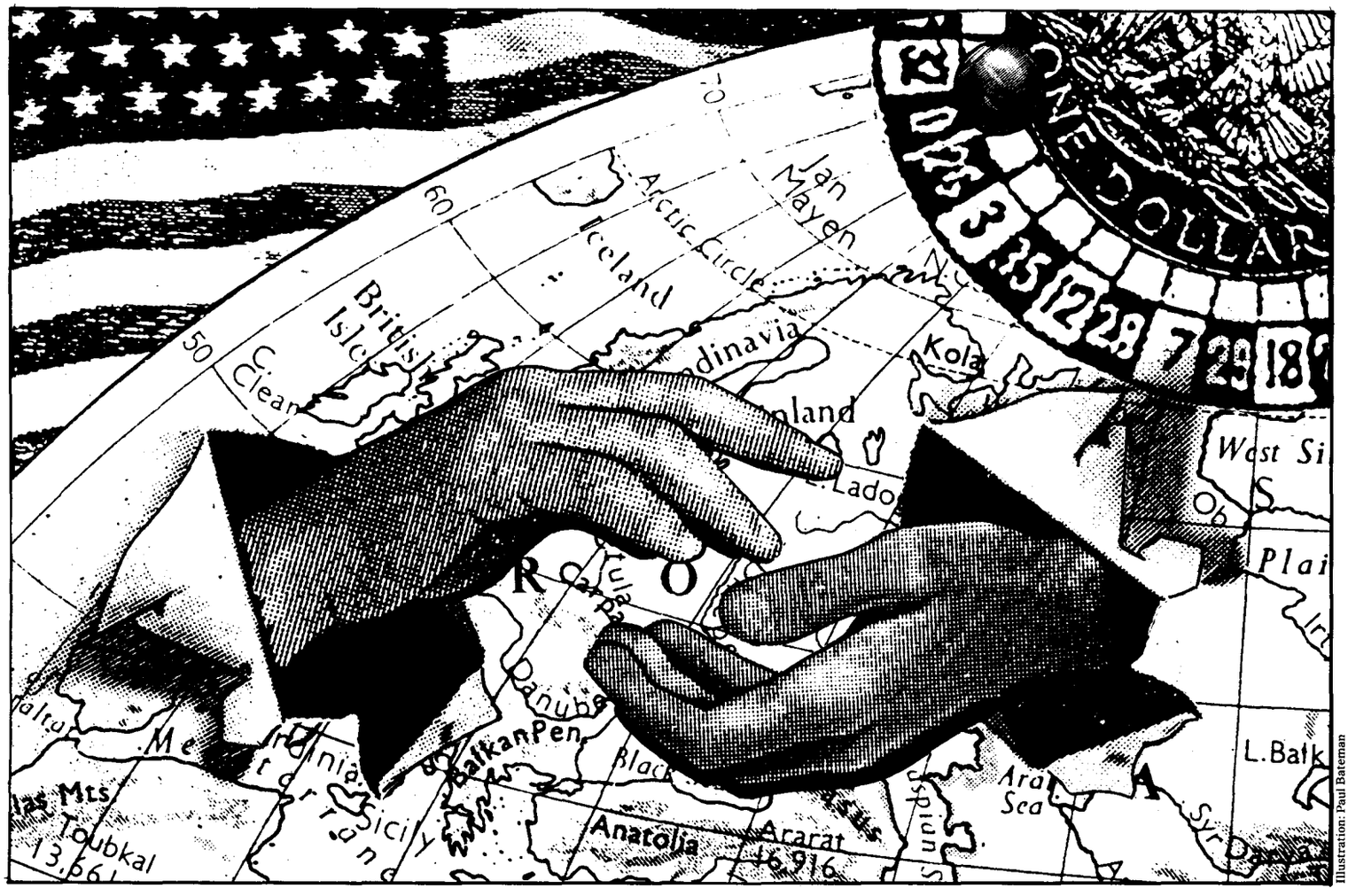

Illustration: Paul Bateman

Born Again Europe

1989 has changed the rules of the game for western Europe as well as eastern Europe. **David Marquand** argues for a fundamental reconstruction of the European Community

The only certainty about the new Europe now struggling to be born is that its shape and character will remain uncertain for a long time to come. Two years ago, nobody could have predicted that Lech Walesa would today be president of Poland, Vaclav Havel of Czechoslovakia or Boris Yeltsin of Russia. Six months ago, nobody could have predicted that John Major would be prime minister of Britain. By definition, we cannot tell what upsets 1991 will bring, but there is no reason to believe that there will be fewer than in 1989 or 1990. In these circumstances, prophecy is a mug's game; even a display of confidence is tempting providence.

Yet four broad trends are plain enough. In the first place, it is as clear that the European Community's 1992 project is irreversible, that the drive to a form of monetary union will therefore continue and that it will almost certainly be accompanied by attempts to move, in however muddled a fashion, and with however many twists and turns along the way, to something called 'political union' as well. No matter which party is in power in this country, there will be teeth-gnashing in Westminster and anxiety in Whitehall. But although the other Community countries are likely to display more tenderness to British susceptibilities than they did when Margaret Thatcher was in power, they will not be prepared to jeopardise the whole enterprise for Britain's sake.

For the 1992 project has a logic and dynamic which our intellectually arthritic political class has not yet grasped. It involves, of course, a massive programme of deregulation. But it also involves extensive re-regulation, and the latter inevitably entails a bigger role for Community institutions. If the officials who staff them are to be subject to democratic control, that in turn entails a bigger role for the European Parliament. Since it is logically impossible to free capital movements while still maintaining stable exchange rates unless a common monetary policy is in force, the 1992 project also entails a European monetary authority of some kind. On a deeper level, it is clear that, if market forces are to remain the servants, rather than the masters, of democratic politics, the economic integration now in progress must go hand in hand with further political integration. National governments will lose power in any event: have indeed lost it. The question is where it goes. If the 1992 programme is left to stand on its own, without accompanying institutional changes, it will go mainly to irresponsible multinational corporations. Whatever may be true of British Conservatives, that is not a choice which the rest of the Community is willing to make.

The second trend is less obvious but equally significant. The new united Germany whose birth last year was the single most important event in Euro-

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pean history since the beginning of the cold war is already the nearest thing to a great power between the Atlantic and the Soviet border. Before long, it may be the nearest thing to a great power between the Atlantic and the Pacific. Irrespective of political forms, irrespective, for that matter, of Germany's own wishes, the Europe of the 90s will therefore be German-centred in a sense which was true of Bismarck's or, for that matter, of Frederick Barbarossa's Europe as much as of Hitler's but which has not been true since 1945.

The Germany on which it will be centred will not, however, be the old Federal Republic writ large. Forty years of history cannot be wiped off the slate. East Germans cannot suddenly become West Germans. They may have loathed the regime in whose tentacles they were caught, but they were nevertheless shaped by it. For good or ill, they will bring to the new Germany the hopes and fears, the memories and longings, which they have inherited from their past and which must condition their future. In doing so, they will change their fellow citizens in the west, just as their fellow citizens in the west will change them. Behind the much-discussed economic and political dimensions of German unification, there lies, in short, a more complex cultural dimension. Willy-nilly, the Germans are engaged in a prolonged, almost certainly painful redefinition of their identity as a people. And in redefining their own identity, they will necessarily redefine the identity of the Community of which their country is the hinge.

That leads on to the third and fourth trends. The problems of transition in eastern Europe have turned out to be enormously more difficult and the solutions more painful than anyone expected in the euphoria of 1989. Czechoslovakia apart, the societies which will be suffering the pains have few or no democratic traditions to draw upon and, in almost all ethnic hatreds and irredentist ambitions are rife. Fragile new regimes, long on hope but short on experience, necessarily dependent on the bureaucracies they have inherited from their stalinist predecessors and encumbered by expectations they cannot satisfy, may well see in these ambitions their only reservoir of popular support. If they do, it is hard to believe that smug and prosperous western Europe could insulate itself from the ensuing conflicts, any more than the western Europe of our grandparents and great-grandparents could insulate itself from the consequences of the assassination at Sarajevo.

If this is true of eastern Europe, it is doubly true of the Soviet Union, where the stalinist terror was even more savage and did even more to destroy the mutual trust which provides the basis of a civic culture. Partly because of this, and partly because of the very nature of the Soviet state, economic dislocation has gone much further there, while ethnic conflicts and resentments are even fiercer. For the unravelling of the Soviet Union spells more than the unravelling of another economically irrational and politically illegitimate communist regime. It also spells the end of the last great European empire; and the end of empire is usually a bloody business. So far bloodshed has been relatively rare, but upheavals on the scale of those that accompanied the end of the British Raj in India and French rule in North Africa should come as no surprise.

The Europe in which the 1992 project comes to fruition will, in short, be almost unimaginably different from the Europe in which it was conceived. That Europe – the Europe of the Single European Act – was still, in essentials, the Europe of Bevin, Marshall, Adenauer and Monnet and by the same token the Europe of Stalin, Ulbricht and Gottwald. It was, in other words, the Europe that emerged, unplanned and unwanted, from the crucible of the Czechoslovak putsch, the Berlin blockade, the North Atlantic Treaty and the Schuman Plan. Of course, it had changed a great deal since its original emergence. The western tip of the continent, at any rate, was far more united, far more prosperous and far more confident than anyone had thought possible in the immediate postwar period. The power relationships within the Atlantic world had been transformed, to its advantage and to the disadvantage of the United States. The modestly supranational coal and steel Community envisaged in the Schuman Plan had doubled its membership and acquired extensive new competences. Partly because of this, the economies of its member-states had become irreversibly interdependent as well as unprecedentedly productive – not the least of the reasons why their governments were prepared to pool sovereignty on the scale the 1992 project required.

But, in the last analysis, the similarities between the Europe of 1985 and the Europe of 1950 were more striking than the dissimilarities. Both halves of the continent were still subject to the magnetic pulls of the superpowers from whose rivalry the postwar settlement had emerged. The communist regimes in the east were still kept in power by Soviet tanks. The Carolingian little Europe in the west was still the eastern province of an Atlantic imperium whose capitals were New York, Washington and Cambridge, Massachusetts and whose western outposts were Los Angeles and the Bay Area of California.

It was a rich and flourishing province, no doubt, but the nerve centres of its world were still on the eastern seaboard of the United States. As befitted a rich and flourishing province in someone else's empire, it was also rather inward-looking. There was much talk of the need for a European voice in world affairs, balancing the American voice, but when the voice made itself heard, it rarely had anything interesting to say. Above all, little Europe did not need to tailor its own development to the needs of the wider Europe of which it was part. The notion that the postwar settlement might one day be undone, that the whole continent might come together again and that the Community should frame its policies with that possibility in mind, was too far-fetched for serious people to take seriously.

'The values which inspired the great crowds that thronged the squares of eastern Europe are not western values. They are human values'

Now all that is changed. Just as the new Germany cannot be the old Federal Republic writ large, so the new Europe cannot be the old Carolingian little Europe, with a few suppliant extensions on its eastern borders. Indeed, Carolingian little Europe is already a thing of the past: German unification has seen to that. Even if the Community does not take in new eastern members, its centre of gravity has already shifted several hundred miles to the east. Whatever its political arrangements may be, the Europe of the 21st century will have more in common with the Europe of the late 19th than with that of 1985 or 1955. Prague, Warsaw and Budapest will be as much part of it as London, Paris and Brussels. There is a good chance that Moscow, Kiev and Leningrad will be part of it as well.

What might be called the 'endist' interpretation of the revolutions in eastern Europe – the interpretation offered, in its most extreme form, in Francis Fukuyama's notorious essay, 'The End Of History', and echoed in a thousand newspaper editorials on both sides of the Atlantic – holds that this wider Europe will be, in all essentials, an extension of western Europe, or perhaps of that mysterious entity known as the Western world. For according to that interpretation, the real significance of the last two years is not so much that the cold war is over as that the West has won, and that the West has won because Western values have won. The obvious implication is that eastern Europe will now have to set about learning those values. The West will teach and the East will learn. For the West knows the secrets of the market economy and pluralist democracy; and the East does not. The only hope for the East is to learn them from the West as fast as it can.

That, or something like it, is the logic of the British government's approach to eastern Europe and, for that matter, of the European Community's approach as well. It hardly needs saying that the reality is enormously more complicated. It is true that part of the driving force behind the east European revolutions was a passionate longing to rejoin the mainstream of European civilisation. But the key word in that sentence is 're-join'. The values which inspired the great crowds that thronged the squares of eastern Europe in the closing weeks of 1989 are not *Western* values. They are human values, or perhaps European values: values, in any event, to which the cultures of what used to be the communist *bloc* – including, of course, the cultures of what is still precariously the Soviet Union –

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have as strong a claim as do those of western Europe and North America. When it comes to deciding what these values mean, or ought to mean, in today's world, we have as much to learn from them as they from us. Indeed, we may well have more: their attachment to the values in question has, after all, been tested far more sorely than ours. Who has sacrificed more to 'live in truth'? President Havel or President Bush? And who has done more to earn our attention?

In some areas, of course, eastern Europe does have things to learn from the so-called west. But it also has things to teach. In any case the language of teacher and pupil is misleading as well as patronising. The important question is not who learns what from whom. It is how the two halves of the re-united continent will interact with each other: what kind of soup will emerge from the pot into which each will throw its memories of the past and its hopes for the future. We will not know the answer to that question for some time, but it is already clear that Community Europe will no longer be able to insulate itself from wider Europe, even if it wants to. Because it will be inextricably part of wider Europe, it will be less susceptible to the tug of the Atlantic, less likely to share the American perspective on the rest of the world and more conscious of the differences between its interests and the interests of the United States.

This leads on to a more complex point. It is a truism to say that the stalinist command economy has failed. Indeed, its failure has turned out to be far more complete, and far more destructive in its human and environmental consequences, than anyone – West or East – realised before the seismic upheavals of 1989 began. The question, however, is what to put in its place. 'A market economy', say the 'endists', as though that were the end of the matter. But what kind of market economy? Casino capitalism on the model of Britain and the United States? Or social-market capitalism on the model of central Europe and, with some relatively unimportant differences, of Scandinavia?

If the east Europeans opt for casino capitalism they are likely to end as impoverished, resentful and eventually mutinous economic helots in a system dominated by alien multinationals. But the pressures to take that option are enormously powerful. In present-day eastern Europe, it is in fact the easy option. It is quick, it is attractive to short-sighted foreign commentators and investors and, by a terrible paradox, it is also attractive to native populations for whom the slogans of the free market have become a kind of cargo cult, promising a speedy route to a western standard of living.

The social-market option, on the other hand, is very slow – one of the reasons why British governments in search of a quick fix have never taken it. For social-market capitalism depends upon an extraordinarily subtle and sophisticated network of mutual dependencies and co-operative intermediate institutions, growing out of a flourishing, solidaristic civil society. And the most terrible legacy of stalinist totalitarianism is a stunted civil society, systematically and deliberately corrupted by the agencies of a totalitarian state. The east Europeans will, of course, decide for themselves which path they want to take. But their ability to take it will be hugely affected by western attitudes and policies – above all, by the attitudes and policies of the Community. If it adopts the simplistic triumphalism and market fetishism of the 'endists', as so many British commentators insistently urge it to do, the consequences for the entire continent are likely to be tragic.

That is only the beginning of the story. The Community has given western Europe a way to have its cake and eat it: to transcend the sovereign nation state, whose ambitions and jealousies have so often drenched the continent in blood, while still respecting national diversities and national interests. Now that eastern and central Europe have emerged from the prison-house unity of stalinism, and rediscovered the ambitions and jealousies which the stalinists suppressed, they desperately need a similar safeguard against the demons of the past. They may not find one, of course: one of the most alarming features of present-day eastern Europe is that these demons have plenty of work for plenty of not-so-idle hands. But their best hope of finding one is to join the Community – the one undeniably supranational political entity in Europe and, as such, the most successful solvent of national conflicts which this conflict-ridden continent has ever known.

Whether they realise this themselves, I do not know. But there is not much doubt that sooner or later they will be knocking on the Community's door. Like the Portuguese, the Greeks and the Spanish after their escape from fascism, they will be asking for a manifestation of European solidarity; and as with the Portuguese, the Greeks and the Spanish, the manifestation they will want will be full participation in the decision-making processes of the Community. The arguments for allowing them to participate will be at least as powerful as were the essentially similar arguments for allowing their southern predecessors to do so.

But participation in what kind of Community? The conventional wisdom is that a wider Community would also be a shallower one. Those in this country who still hanker for a shallower Community – those who still dream of the loose-knit free-trade association of sovereign states which, for 30 years, has danced before successive British governments like a will o' the wisp – welcome a wider one for that reason. Those on the European mainland who recognise that 1992 implies more supranationalism, not less, want to deepen first and widen later, if at all.

'If the east Europeans opt for casino capitalism they are likely to end as impoverished, resentful and eventually mutinous economic helots'

Despite the obvious differences between them, both schools of thought share the same premise. Yet that premise no longer looks anything like as convincing as it once did. The assumption that widening and deepening pull against each other derives from the Monnet conception of the early 50s, in which economies had to be integrated first, and polities later. If that assumption is taken for granted, then it does follow that enlargement to the east would result in a looser, less integrated Community. The battered, unproductive, skill-starved and environmentally destructive economies of eastern Europe cannot possibly stand up to the rigours of post-1992 competition for a long time to come; if they were forced to do so, their chances of taking the social-market option rather than the casino one would be nil. As apprentice social-market economies, determined to be something more than reservoirs of cheap labour for more fortunate societies, they would need derogations from the rules of the internal market for a long – perhaps for a very long – time ahead. If integration is seen primarily in economic terms, their membership would either slow the process down or do them more long-term harm than good.

What that proves, however, is that it is time to question the orthodoxy inherited from the early 50s. In the early 50s, superpower hegemony was unchallenged, and the division of Europe newly-minted. The Carolingian little Europeans whom Monnet was trying to unite had no choice but to huddle together in the shadow of American power. There was no point in dreaming grandiose political dreams and no need to articulate a distinct European perspective on the world. The founding fathers of the Community were almost certainly right in thinking that if Europe were to be united at all, it could only be united through the bread-and-butter, step-by-step functionalism of economic integration. But it does not follow that this is still true in the quite different circumstances of the early 90s, when Europe is no longer divided, when one superpower is unravelling, when the other is in decline and when – as the Gulf crisis shows – even little Europe's interests are diverging ever more sharply from the interests of its erstwhile protector on the other side of the Atlantic.

In these new circumstances, why go on treating economic integration as the only possible foundation for eventual union, and political integration as the coping stone? Would it not be better – certainly for central and eastern Europe, and perhaps for the whole of Europe – if they changed places? And if they did so, the whole scene would change. Integration would cease to be a matter of creating the conditions for Community-wide free competition before all else. It would become a matter of creating a political structure, in

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which the functions of government were divided on federal lines between supranational, national and regional tiers, but which tolerated considerable economic diversity and protected the weak against predatory competition from the strong.

The result would certainly be untidy. Politically, the Community would be at least proto-federal. It would be at least as concerned with the 'high politics' of foreign, security and monetary policy as with the 'low politics' of agricultural support, merger policy and product standards. Indeed, some areas of 'low politics' might well be returned from Brussels and Strasbourg to member governments, or even devolved to a regional tier below them. The Council of Ministers and the European Parliament would share legislative power; a Commission responsible to the Parliament and deriving from it would be the union executive. Economically, things would be much less clear. In the little-European heartland there would be a single market, on 1992 lines. To the east, and perhaps also to the south, there would be a variety of economic regimes, all moving towards full incorporation, but at different speeds. At first sight it would look rather like the Europe of 'variable geometry' which has sometimes been seen as a way of solving the British problem. But economic variation would be combined with political union.

At this point, the European debate and the parochial British debate intersect. We have had to redefine our identity too; and the redefinition has been much more difficult than some British supporters of European integration like to admit. The options are only too plain. We can be an increasingly junior partner to an increasingly inward-looking and slowly declining United States. We can be a rather shop-soiled island Sweden. Or we can be part of an evolving European Union. For nearly 30 years, our heads have told us that the only sane option is the last. But our hearts have rebelled. For although we are part of Europe, and have been part of it ever since the Roman legions first set foot on our shores, we are also separate from it, not just geographically, but culturally and in our image of ourselves. No other European country has a church like the Anglican church; no other European political culture has been shaped by the doctrine of absolute and inalienable parliamentary sovereignty; no other country in western Europe successfully fought off both Napoleon and Hitler. Because of all this we have found it extraordinarily painful emotionally and extraordinarily hard intellectually to come to terms with the choices we now face. But we *are* part of Europe, all the same; and we are also part of the European Community. We cannot leave the continent to which we belong, and re-locate ourselves in some mysterious island of the blessed somewhere in the middle of the Atlantic. Nor can we be excluded from any European Union worthy of the name.

'In these new circumstances, why go on treating economic integration as the only possible foundation for eventual union, and political union as the coping stone?'

It is as important for the rest of Europe as it is for us that our dilemma should be resolved. Successive British governments have tried to evade it, to pretend that Community membership has to do with economics rather than with politics, that the clear commitment of the Rome Treaty to an 'ever-closer union' does not mean what it says, that we can belong to it on our terms rather than on its. But these evasions have not worked. They have made our dilemma more painful, not less, exacerbating our identity crisis instead of resolving it. Perhaps it is time to take the bull by the horns, to make it clear that union really does mean union, that the Community's fundamental purposes are political after all, to confront our fears instead of shying away from them. If the Community took the political road I have tried to sketch out, that is what we would have to do. Conventional wisdom takes it for granted that the British people would balk. I am not so sure. More than once in our history, we have shown that, when we have no alternative, we are better at facing facts than our rulers have given us credit for being.●

David Marquand is the author of The Unprincipled Society and professor of politics at Salford University.

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Pleasure Principles

A Roundtable Discussion

Sexual relationships are the focus of some of our most intense emotions. Here a group of people with different experiences and expectations explore the question of sexual fidelity

The participants in the roundtable are: Bekah, aged 23, who doesn't live with her partner. Antonio, aged 34, who lives with his partner. James, aged 27, who recently ended an open relationship. Louisa, aged 31, has been with her partner for seven years and recently married him. Vivien, aged 75, was divorced from her husband 50 years ago. Graham, aged 75, has been married twice. David, aged 69, is divorced. He is now in a relationship but not living with his partner. Chris, aged 25, lives with his partner. Morika, aged 23, is in a relationship but not living with her partner. The discussion was chaired by Chris Granlund.

Bekah, what does fidelity mean to you?
Bekah I don't think it's just a question of sex. Being unfaithful could be just talking to someone, it could be to do with revealing really intimate things.

But if you were to find out that your partner had slept with someone else, wouldn't that have a greater impact?
Bekah Yes, but I'd be really upset about both.
Antonio I can't get rid of some sexual connotation because for me it is the sexual relationship with my partner which I see as the most private aspect of our relationship.
James The fact that somebody is sleeping with somebody outside the relationship is like a symbol of their independence. It means that there are things about them which you do not know, which you do not understand, which aren't completely yours. This applies equally in an open relationship.

Louisa, you asked your husband last night whether he had ever been unfaithful to you. Did you have this kind of complexity in mind when you asked the question?
Louisa I was thinking sexually, but I think there's an awful lot more involved. Going out for dinner with a colleague and not telling your partner, that sort of thing.
Vivien I can't quite envisage what James calls an 'open relationship', but people who get married commit themselves to live together and to support one another through good times and bad to the exclusion of other people. The C of E marriage service puts it clearly whether one accepts it or not. That includes everything to me.
Antonio I agree, but it doesn't include everybody.
Vivien No, but it includes all aspects of life.
Antonio But not all aspects of people.
Vivien Of course, and I wouldn't say it does. But for people who marry, they know quite clearly what they are letting themselves in for...

That sounds ominous...
Vivien It's not ominous at all, but any relationship is a risk, and if one is entrusting one's future life to some other person, one wants to have some assurance that the other person is equally committed. It didn't turn out like that for me because my spouse didn't have the same idea at all about commitment.

Could you tell us about that?
Vivien In the first year of our marriage, he was having affairs with various women, and I had to pay for a couple of abortions which at that time were absolutely illegal, and then he left and then he came back. Then he left me again with two small children and never paid a penny. But there you are, if you marry, you take a risk.

Was he unfaithful before you married?
Vivien How should I know?

You didn't discuss that with him?
Vivien No. He asked me to marry him and I didn't say, well are you going to be unfaithful before we marry? Believe me, during the war you didn't waste time on such niceties.

Graham, was it assumed at the start of your marriage that you would be faithful?
Graham There was a tacit assumption and she kept to that, she was faithful. In my first marriage, I was faithful except for two occasions. I had a prolonged affair that involved one of the people who I was working with. Apart from that I have been faithful. My wife in fact knew something of what was going on. I had no infidelity of any kind during my second marriage.

Did you tell your first wife about the infidelity?
Graham Yes, though she didn't know the extent of it.
Chris Did you feel guilty?
Graham To some extent, yes.
Chris I think the most powerful allies, or weapons if you like, of exclusive lovers, are jealousy and guilt. I've experimented with infidelity, but I've never been able to overcome either jealousy or guilt, and therefore faithful relationships are the only ones that I can be in.
David There is an expectation that we should go through life and be faithful to just one partner. I envy those who manage to do that, but sex drive and all the factors being variable, I would suggest that it's an expectation which is met by few. There have been polls carried out and in fact they do reveal that a high proportion of extra-marital relations do exist.
Vivien If people have in mind the possibility of relationships outside their marriage it seems to me that this gets in the way of developing a relationship. But there are all kinds of relationships, I know of several where both the husband and wife have had relationships outside the marriage, they knew about it and accepted it. But the marriage nevertheless lasted, this is unusual, but it happens.
David It is the idea of a majority of people to have a life-long union. The fact that statistics show clearly that in the end this is an unreal expectation seems to point to certain factors which intervene which cut across the possibilities of sustained relationships.
Antonio Through the first three years of my current relationship, I had to change my idea about what I wanted this relationship to be. At first I had expectations of fidelity that were related to my Spanish working-class background. For me to be with my partner means that I need to trust her, and I need to know to what extent I can

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Illustration: Frank Gambino

count on that intimacy. Of course, I need to restrain my sexual drive, although I know those things are completely arbitrary and culturally created. I still don't want to have an open relationship, but I now accept that at some point, one of us might be unfaithful.

Bekah, have you experienced infidelity?

Bekah My parents split up when I was about 17 in a really horrible way. My dad was unfaithful with a friend of my mum. That changed my attitude a lot towards fidelity. I've never felt the need to be unfaithful. But when I split up with my boyfriend, he said that he was nearly unfaithful to me once, he said it was because he was missing me so much, which I thought was a bit odd. So I felt insecure, especially because of all this business with my dad, so I'm very wary, I don't trust many people.

'The most powerful allies, or weapons if you like, of exclusive lovers, are jealousy and guilt'

Vivien Nobody can guarantee security.

Antonio No matter what your expectations of a relationship may be, it's natural, logical and healthy that things will sometimes go wrong. I've known my partner for five years and I've changed a great deal and she too has changed a great deal. I have to accept, whether I like it or not, that the relationship is going to keep changing.

Chris, can you describe the feelings you had when you were having an affair outside of your relationship?

Chris At the time I didn't think I loved the person I was with and therefore I quite easily got into having a relationship with somebody else. While I was having that relationship, I realised that I actually did love the woman that I was with and I was consumed by guilt. Intellectually perhaps, I still like the idea of an open relationship, but I feel that I would always be either jealous or guilty. That's not to say that other people cannot have these types of relationships. Love is a very exclusive thing and I think it can be damagingly exclusive. It is good to be able to question it.

David In the end the pain is just the same. That's perhaps the most important issue. The pain of a relationship breakdown.

Antonio But you're never told in advance what a relationship is going to be. The borders and the rhythms in which a relationship moves keep being planned again everyday.

James There can be discussions and agreements. For instance, I was recently in an open relationship, where it was fine by mutual consent to have sex outside the relationship. Now I think there are certainly problems there because asking people not to be jealous, is asking them not to be human. The point where I felt quite capable of doing murder was when I discovered that he had been seeing other people without telling me, which was breaking our particular set of rules.

Graham, in your first marriage after you'd been unfaithful and you'd discussed this to some degree with your wife, how long did your marriage continue?

Graham Until her death. And one of the things is that the commitment to family and home never wavered at all during that period. Certainly to family and children.

Do you think it was threatened by the other relationship?

Graham I think so, yes. Most of all it was during the war years and I was away from home and I wouldn't have done it in normal circumstances, but I was away for very long periods of time which made a great deal of difference.

Vivien, how did you feel when you discovered that your husband had been unfaithful to you?

Vivien Well, this was about six months after we'd got married and it was humiliating to be betrayed by somebody in whom I had reposed complete trust. The crux of the matter seems to me how far each person considers the other person's feelings before their own. I assume that nobody can go through life without being tempted away from one's partner, the point is what one does about it.

Louisa I don't understand why you tolerated his infidelities.

Vivien I loved him very deeply. I could not imagine life without him and it never occurred to me that he would spend the next 50 years running after women.

Morika, do you have an idea of what you

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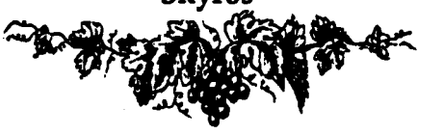

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expect from a relationship?

Morika I've been with the bloke I'm with now for about three years, which seems like really ages although the relationship has changed a lot. At the moment I feel that I need a lot more than he can give me. Sometimes I get a bit anxious about the idea that our relationship might be unable to survive a momentary infidelity. I feel I'd hassle him a lot less if I could get out on the town with condoms in my back pocket! I can't help thinking that too much emphasis on the sexual aspect of fidelity is really limiting.

Antonio We seem to be making the assumption that if you're faithful to a person, you're going to get bored sexually in the long term and then you start finding other people attractive. I think it's more complex than that. Sometimes I feel bored with my partner and sometimes I don't. Living with her hasn't stopped me from considering how attractive other women are, or even men. It's something that I've always done. So it's not just a question of sexual pride. She is not just my sexual partner, she is also the person I trust most.

How would you handle a minor sexual infidelity that didn't threaten the existence of your relationship?

Antonio I would suffer and cry. I know how I would like to behave, but again I think it's very important to see a relationship and unfaithfulness as something that you deal with on a daily basis, because you just don't know when you are going to be hit and how you will react.

Louisa, you asked Vivien how she tolerated her husband's infidelity, how would you respond to a situation like that?

Louisa I'm not being judgmental, but I don't think I could stand it. Not because of jealousy, but just because of the complete disappointment and let down. And I would be forever thinking, he says that he's going there, but is he really? I wouldn't accept that and I have actually said to him that if he ever sleeps with anyone else, I just won't see him again.

Vivien If my husband had not gone off with this woman, it would have destroyed me.

Louisa That's because you felt that you would rather have him on his terms than not at all.

Vivien I'm not sure that is the conclusion I would have reached, but he left when our second child was a baby anyway, and I was in no fit state to think very clearly about any of these things. I would have gone round the bend if he had stayed.

James, these are heterosexual relationships involving marriage or people living together. What was your experience in a more openly defined relationship?

James There was a stage when say for two months, I was quite definitely having a good time. It was after that when I had become far too involved, far too emotional about him, that the trouble started. Part of me was saying, 'What a darling!', and the other part was saying, 'What a bastard!'. And it's such hard work that in the end you think I really can't be bothered. That sounds very sane and very unproblematic, but there were certainly times when I couldn't have been trusted near him with a Sabatier knife. I think infidelity was neither here nor there. It was simply a question of a balance of commitment, me feeling almost absurdly committed in comparison to him.

Morika So neither unfaithfulness nor open relationships work?

Vivien It depends what you want from life. If you're always looking for a fresh thrill round the corner, you'll have them as long as you're attractive or until you get fed up with it.

David Sexuality is essentially all about the body and its pleasure. One of the reasons unfaithfulness occurs is because the partners do not talk through the problems they have in the sexual sphere in terms of giving each other pleasure. Many marriages are not founded on that basis – they are sexually superficial.

Antonio No matter how committed you are, when you've been with someone for 15 or 20 years it is very difficult for that person to provide you with the feeling that they are not just the same old person you think they are. That is something you have to deal with.

David What I am saying is that as a relationship continues the dynamism and sensuality of a relationship weakens. It comes adrift because it has not been discussed.

Chris, can we come back to your experience of infidelity. How has it affected you?

Chris The longest time I was in a relationship is three years, but it seems to be true for many people that they realise that the relationship they have is very valuable. They realise that the attractions of multiple relationships are perhaps illusory if they want to hold on to the deep valuable thing that they have. But I think people also sacrifice a lot through marriage. I know people who have lost a lot of friends, they are not two people anymore in many respects, and that is very limiting. There's no harm when you're looking for your future relationships in trying hard to resist that, trying to have your cake and eat it.

Antonio You want to have everything and that's hard because as soon as you become an adult you realise that everything has a price.

Bekah I think that in a couple you've got to keep your own individuality. I hate couples who talk in 'we's' even when they're apart. It's important to have your own separate identity, even if you're really in love with somebody. That's why I don't believe in marriage. It's an off-putting thing to see somebody and think, I'm going to be with that person for the rest of my life.

'Too much emphasis on the sexual aspect of fidelity is really limiting'

Is a more open relationship that allows other sexual relationships a possible solution to that dilemma?

Bekah Yes, it could be as long as you and your partner agree on the terms whatever they are. That's fine as long as there's no deception, like my first boyfriend saying that he was *nearly* unfaithful. I thought that was unfaithful because he hadn't told me about it at the time.

Is it better not to tell your partner if you have been unfaithful?

David Yes, I would say it's probably better not to disclose.

Would that be easier for you or for the relationship? What does it protect?

David It tends to protect the other person rather than myself.

Chris You can't hide something because you're pretending you're protecting someone, truthfulness is absolutely vital.

Bekah If you're that close to somebody, and that's really an important thing, then you should tell them.

Antonio If it's something important to your relationship, then you should be open and it should be discussed. On the other hand if it's something quite trivial, then you have to take into account what your partner will feel about it.

Vivien It's deception that murders trust because you never know when the next deception is going to turn up.

James I agree that it murders trust because it means that you can't ever be certain that someone is telling the truth. The relationship isn't in a position to deal with problems.

Morika I resent the idea that having sex with someone is the great act of unfaithfulness, that it has such dominance. I would like to find a way of negotiating a one-off fling while maintaining the relationship that I have put loads of work into and that I wouldn't give up for the sake of a good bit of nookie.

James In an open relationship, theoretically, you could do exactly what you want to. But what about deception?

Morika It would hurt him a lot so I wouldn't do it. Although I really do feel that it shouldn't matter.

Louisa It's wrong to say I wouldn't tell my partner because it would hurt them. A lot of infidelity is about self, it's about whether you put your own urges before the heartache that you will cause others.

Is it as easy to be honest to your partner in practice as you feel you should be in theory?

Vivien These things are never easy. Life isn't easy. Life is unfair, unjust and never easy. Anybody who thinks that is going to be rudely surprised. But if you start off with principles, at least you know what your principles are, you may break them, but at least you know what you are doing.●

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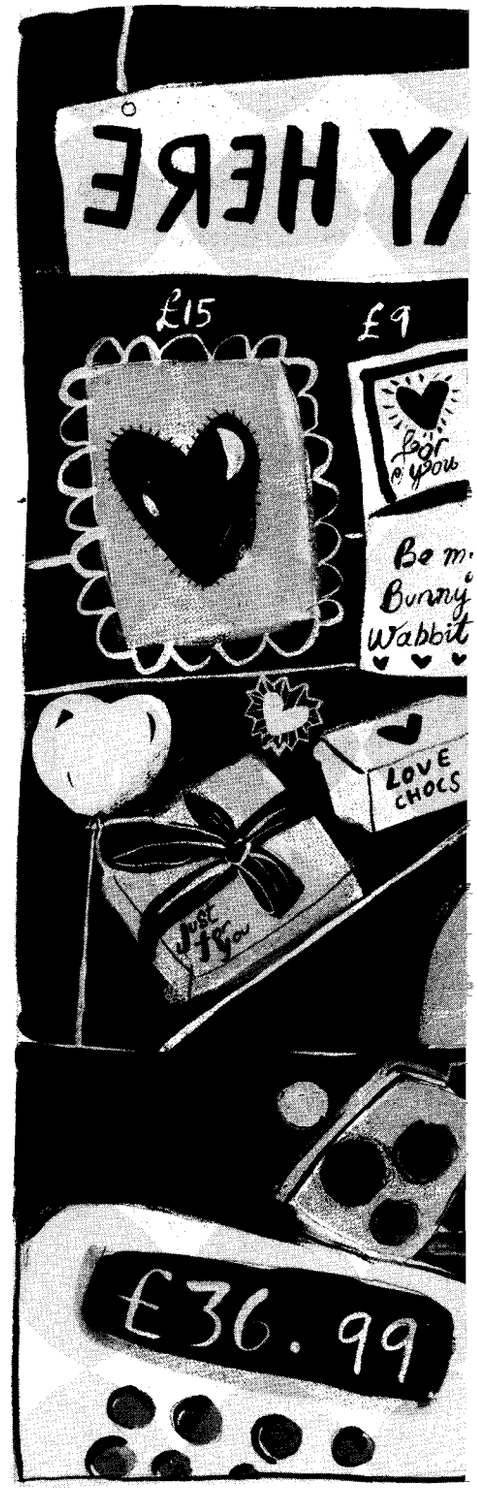
Cardiac Arrest

Andy Medhurst, on the way to his letter-box, wonders whether Valentine's Day is a Good Thing



It happens every January. Shop windows that had been full of robins and parcels and aerosol snow suddenly sprout hearts – paper hearts, plastic hearts, inflatable hearts. The whole cardiac carnival signals that the first big post-Christmas festival of spending is on the way.

Valentine's day has indistinct origins in pre-Christian early spring festivals which celebrated the beginning of the end of winter and the regeneration of the natural cycle of growth and fertility. It was the period when the birds began to mate and the sap began to rise. Now it's sappy in quite a different sense – it's all pink icing and froth and teddy bears, an iconography of infantilism.

It was the mid-Victorian period which saw Valentine's Day assume the form it has today. One Victorian cynic, J D Chambers, observed that it was 'a much-degenerated custom, the only observation of any note consisting merely of the sending of jocular, anonymous letters... on the first page of which is seen some ridiculous coloured caricature of the male or female figure with a few burlesque verses below.'

The introduction of the penny post was the key factor in making February 14 the busiest postal day of the year outside Christmas. Previously, the day had been marked by the upper classes demurely exchanging tokens of love while the peasants seized the chance for sanctioned debauchery. The Victorians erased the latter element: Valentine's Day can be slushy or funny, but its iconography remains curiously chaste – it's all about romantic love but it's never about sex.

This, perhaps, is why today's cards have largely forsaken the human caricatures that offended Chambers in favour of animals. To walk into a greetings card shop at this time of year is to enter a menagerie of mush. All the eye can see is cuteness and cuddliness – cuddly cats, cuddly koalas, cuddly crocodiles, all decked out in hideous electric pastel shades.

There are mice in top hats, hippos on bicycles, intertwined giraffes under the caption 'Wanna Neck?' and innumerable refugees from the softer end of Disneyland. Even Garfield and Snoopy, creatures one might expect to treat the whole circus with amused disdain, come over all soppy. It's a nightmare of coy evasiveness.

Such pathological cuteness is not confined to the popular end of the market. Open the broadsheet newspapers on February 14 and you'll find the professional and caring classes engaged in a mass stampede back to the nursery. 'Heffalump loves his Mrs Tiggywinkle oodles and lots', 'Squidgy-Bum wants Nibbles to play with his dangly bits'; there's column after column of this kind of drivel.

Valentine's Day becomes the excuse for regression, for yearning after a world where losing your teddy was the biggest tragedy life could offer, a time when Nanny dished up tapioca for tea. In other words, a time when the real and painful contradictions of mature adult relationships hadn't yet begun.

The other function these baby-talk declarations of devotion have is to serve as the exact opposite of the lonely hearts ads. Where the latter plead 'I want someone', the Valentine's message boasts, 'I've got someone', which can be extended to mean 'I'm part of a couple'. Valentine's Day, it hardly needs to be said, is an overwhelmingly heterosexual institution, and worse still it suscribes to what Richard Dyer has labelled the 'Barbara Cartland model' of heterosexuality.

Like Barbara, Valentine's Day is festooned in pink, it's the one day when heterosexuals reclaim that colour from its recent gay associations. It is possible to buy gay Valentine material, though I suspect that depends on where you live. Here in Brighton it's easy to purchase cards on which sun-tanned hunks hide their genitals with cardboard hearts, but how do they sell in Darlington or Dundee?

The media use Valentine's Day as the excuse for going overboard on romance. Famous couples appear on chat shows, side by simpering side, daytime tv gets all broody, while in every women's magazine available there'll be a Jane Asher showing you how to bake a heart-shaped cake. At no other time of the year is the institution of the couple venerated to such an extent – it all adds up to a terrorism of togetherness.

Another aspect of this terror are the jokey cards, often quite cruel in their implication that you send them to people you definately don't fancy. This targeting of the supposedly undesirable has a long history, it was common in pre-industrial villages for the local 'old maid' to receive vindictively parodic Valentine's messages. The senders rarely identify themselves, and this aspect of anonymity is the other key part of the Valentine game.

Receiving an unsigned or cryptically-coded Valentine is supposed to send the recipient into a frenzy of speculation. It's a rather giggly, teenage activity, the sort of thing plotted in *My Guy* and parodied in *Viz*. In any case, though I suppose I risk revealing my own paranoia here, there's always the distinct possibility that the anonymous card is only meant to send you up – taking one seriously could be fatal.

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Illustration: Beverley Levy

So there's a streak of smugness and cruelty about Valentine's Day too, a reinforcement of the primacy of heterosexual coupledom that can simultaneously stigmatise those who are outside that institution. But this is well-hidden under the soft surface of those huge quilted cards, those eiderdowns in envelopes that some people feel compelled to send.

If you peer through the frills, slice through the sugar and elbow your way through the canoodling koalas, Valentine's Day has one message above all others: isn't it nice to be nauseatingly normal?●

Chris Granlund's Valentine's quiz

Heart Beater

Does Valentine's Day a) leave you cold, b) pass you by c) warm the cockles of your heart? Check your heart beat with our self-test quiz.

1. You receive a red rose on February 14. You decide:
a) It must have cost someone a fortune to send
b) To feign indifference but secretly speculate about the sender
c) To dry it and keep it forever
d) It is some kind of Labour Party stunt

2. Falling in love is...
a) Forever on your mind
b) A distraction from serious matters
c) A confused interpretation of hormonal drives
d) What makes life worth living

3. Tick each of the following that you have at home:
a) Candle-light
b) Old theatre tickets
c) Cuddly toys
d) Books about accountancy
e) Tubular steel furniture

4. How often do you get 'crushes'?
a) Can't keep track of them
b) Once in a while
c) Once when I was 14
d) Only when I travel with British Rail

5. Which date comes most readily to mind?
a) The day you met your greatest love
b) Your mother's birthday
c) The end of the tax year
d) The release of Nelson Mandela

6. Occasional day-dreaming is:
a) As important as sleep
b) A character defect
c) An excuse for laziness
d) An art form

7. The ideal film for a first date would be:
a) *Hidden Agenda*
b) *Fantasia*
c) *Dangerous Liaisons*
d) A film of their choice
e) A film of your choice

8. What gives you most pleasure:
a) Walking alone on a wind-swept beach
b) Giving people unexpected presents
c) Persuading people to agree with you in meetings
d) Reminiscing about your childhood

9. Tick the activities you have indulged in:
a) Reading your horoscope
b) Watching for shooting stars
c) Shooting rabbits
d) Throwing coins in wishing wells
e) Throwing coins at goalkeepers

10. What do you value most?
a) A lover's smile
b) Sensual pleasure
c) Status
d) Sharing
e) Shares

11. Choose a book for your bed-time reading:
a) *Ten Days That Shook The World*
b) *120 Days Of Sodom*
c) *The Prince*
d) *The Little Prince*

12. Your idea of a magic moment is:
a) Walking in the rain
b) Waking up in a lover's arms
c) Making a rival feel small
d) The Paul Daniels Show

13. What is your idea of a perfect weekend break?
a) A trip for two to Rome
b) Hostelling in the Dales
c) The Frankfurt bookfair
d) Rambling in the Outer Hebrides

14. Your favourite journey would be:
a) A cruise to Hawaii
b) Sending a colleague on a tour of the Bermuda Triangle
c) Riding a steam train through the Highlands
d) The fastest route to work

15. You know you are in love when:
a) You're sitting by the telephone
b) You can't think straight
c) Your lover inherits £1m
d) You look in the mirror

Now check your scores on p41.

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Richard Dyer reflects on the struggle to change the world of words

Magic Words

Many people put a great deal of energy into cleansing language. A colleague of mine is tireless in her use of 'chairperson' in the face of almost everyone else's implacable use of 'chairman'. Jesse Jackson has headed a campaign to make everyone use 'African-American', a campaign that seems to be working, at least as far as the liberal press in the States is concerned. It is one of the more astonishing achievements of 70s politics that queers now find themselves called by a term they themselves nominated, 'gay'.

Struggling over words is one of the most practical day-to-day activities of what may be broadly characterised as cultural politics. They are at one end of the continuum that includes attention to presentation across the board: Neil Kinnock's suits, magazine covers, the centrality of identity as a basis for activity, and the increased stress on the role of consciousness and culture in our general understanding of why and how things are as they are, and how to change them.

The term 'cultural politics' is itself inadequate to cover all that. In some ways the venerable socialist reference to 'the struggle for hearts and minds' is better because more concrete and inclusive, but it had its own drawbacks. It tended to imply that there was a 'real politics' that was separate from the hearts and minds. But 'culture' is not just the vehicle whereby you win people over to something else that is not culture – culture is politics, politics is culture. The problem with cultural politics is well illustrated by the problem of the struggle over words.

Insisting on the use of the words 'chairperson', 'African-American', 'gay', is a drip-drip-drip of political pressure that we have to sustain. But there's something unsatisfactory about it too. It's not so much its slowness and the seeming inertia of language, but the way there nearly always turns out to be something 'off' about the words and terms we want to get established. We may succeed in some measure in bringing about the change in vocabulary, but how about the meanings and feelings, the minds and the hearts?

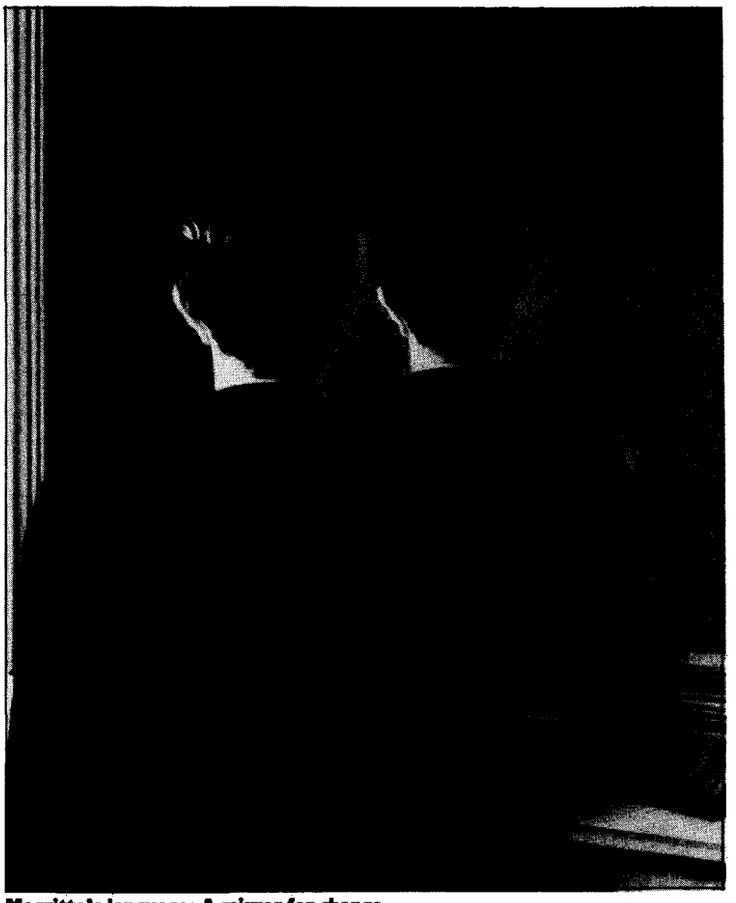
One of the things that set me thinking about this is the fact that I have never liked the word 'gay'. It's still the word I would use and wish to have used to describe myself and those like myself, but all the same it embarrasses me. I'm not giving ground to those who always said that the gay movement had 'spoilt' the word 'gay', had 'deprived the language of a very useful word' by associating it with sexual peculiarity. Those people are welcome to have back 'queer', 'bent', 'pervert' and all the other very useful words that were in danger of going out of all but homophobic commission.

Nor am I going along with the likes of Richard Ingrams, who opined in a recent Sunday newspaper that most of the gays he knew were not 'gay' but miserable (as well any gay man knowing him might be). It's just that to me, 'gay' is a rather trivial word, too much suggesting only fun-fun-fun, not adequate to the complexities and variedness of being... gay. No word could ever do that, but 'gay' feels like a delimitation, an insistence on one aspect.

The alternatives are no better, of course. The 'homo' words, quite apart from the learned feel where one wants a comfortable colloquial term, each have their problems. 'Homosexual' is too emphatically sexual, with no affective or social ring; 'homo-erotic' is too broad, too widely (and usefully) applied to any libidinally-charged contact between people of the same sex (such as fathers and sons, contact sports, men at urinals); 'homophile' is too namby-pamby, not sexual enough, and anyway never caught on.

'Gay' has another problem too. Some people use it to apply to both women and men, but feminist lesbians have generally resisted this. 'Lesbian' instead is not a straightforward issue, however.

I remember a meeting at the Birmingham Gay Centre about changing its name to the Lesbian and Gay Centre. The strongest voices raised against it came from women, for whom 'lesbian' was the term 'they', the doctors and psychologists, had always used against women such as themselves. One said that she'd rather be called 'bent' than 'lesbian'. A word with such a positive ring for one group of women sounded very negative to another.



Magritte's language: A mirror for change

This example suggests that there is only a limited extent to which we can make words feel to everyone how we want them to feel. Words come trailing clouds of connotation that are hard to shake off. Take the history of progressive terms to describe US Americans of African descent. Each new term introduced seemed to break through the hatred and prejudice enshrined in the prevalent vocabulary, yet each term itself was revealed to be oppressive.

'Negro', for instance, drew from an aspirantly objective description of differences between peoples and was adopted, notably by the Harlem Renaissance. It was the way in which one was positive about African-Americans at that time, yet it was founded on biological notions of race that seem the epitome of reaction now, especially considering where racial pride can lead in Aryan hands.

'Coloured' at first sight seemed to avoid this – no longer conjuring up notions of blood ancestry – yet not only did it still focus on a biological difference, it also has the effect of suggesting that there were normal people and 'coloured' ones, as if all people do not share the quality of being one colour or another. 'Black', by ineluctably suggesting the counter term 'white', avoided this by insisting that black people are this colour; it stood against the associations of blackness with evil, insisting that black people

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take pride in their colour.

Yet it seems that 'black' too may have run its course, perhaps because 'black' is still so widely used in connection with the bad, perhaps because it too still focuses on skin. 'African-American' is the first genuinely cultural label, but, apart from being such a mouthful, may run aground on old problems about the 'Africanness' of African-Americans in which many Africans do not recognise themselves and which many African-Americans do not in fact relate to.

The histories of political word change seem always to be this fraught. In part this is a problem of having to have a word at all. White people, heterosexuals, the able-bodied, do not generally go around worrying over what to call themselves and have themselves called. Having a word for oneself and one's group, making a politics out of what that word should be, draws attention to and also reproduces one's marginality, confirms one's place outside of power and thus outside of the mechanisms of change.

Having a word also contains and fixes identity. It is significant to most aspects of who I am that I am gay, but all the same it is only *part* of who I am. Yet the label, and the very real need to make a song and dance about it, is liable to suggest that it is *all* that I am, that it explains everything about me. It has the effect of suggesting that sexuality is fixed, that it consists of clear, unchanging categories, which is untrue both for individuals and for the historical constructions of sexuality.

Similarly, 'disabled' lumps together all forms of departure from the physical norm, as if these all form one common experience which determines what needs to be known by and about disabled people. We will always feel frustrated by having to have words to express our social identity, even while that identity means that we do indeed have to have words for it.

The frustration means that we will almost certainly get fed up with the words that we use and see the negative associations creep back in. This has also to do, however, with the fact that words do not necessarily change reality. *The Sun* now uses the word 'gay', but with just the same hatred as it would have used 'queer' or 'pervert'. No amount of changing the terms to describe African-Americans will change attitudes, as long as material conditions keep African-Americans overwhelmingly in the jobs, housing and conditions fit for 'niggers'.

The limitations of word politics are of a piece with those of the intellectual fashions at the other end of the continuum of cultural politics. Just as left practical politics has taken on the importance of words, of presentation and rhetoric, so much radical intellectual work in recent years has focused its attention on 'discourse', on the way reality is perceived through and shaped by socially constructed ways of making sense of reality.

This intellectual work was much needed; it has broken with tendencies to think of reality as out there, separate from consciousness and culture. Though often thought of as anti-humanist in its rejection of moralising about human destiny, it is in fact profoundly humanist in its stress on the fact of the cultural construction of our lives. It is a political and intellectual stance that should stand us in good stead against any revival of 'scientific' politics with their well-documented inhuman consequences.

Yet 'word politics' runs the risk of thinking that words and discourse are all there is, of forgetting that they are attempts to make sense of what are not themselves words and discourse: bodies, feelings, and things. What we are called and what we call ourselves matters, has material and emotional consequences, but we can expect too much of words. Changing them is a necessary but not a sufficient part of politics. We change the world through words, but not through words – or, it's true, bread – alone. It has to be both.●

Fiona Hackney explores Chinese graphic design

Graphic Margins

A new exhibition at the Design Museum, *Chinese Graphic Design In The 20th Century*, explores the evolving role of women as portrayed through magazines and advertising campaigns. It is more successful, however, in demonstrating graphic design's role as a barometer of political, social and economic change. In particular, it exposes the tensions experienced by a largely feudal society attempting to reconcile Western influence with Chinese traditions and to forge its own contemporary cultural identity.

Western influence centred on the urban business community of Shanghai, where 23 distinct foreign nationalities lived within the boundaries of the international settlement. They imported their own advertisements and, as popular interest in Western lifestyles and social values developed, corresponding companies sprang up supplying cosmetics, tobacco and ready-to-wear clothing. Much of the accompanying increase in advertising was targeted at women.

A new consumer class of women with expendable incomes emerged for the first time in China as private industry drew women into the workforce. The Chinese 'new woman' was prey to a barrage of images, usually wrought in the sophisticated gloss of Western art deco (the 'Shanghai style'), and consumer goods. These promised to define her as independent and active, enjoying sports and fashionable clothes.

The new literature and specialised magazines for women explored new possibilities for them outside the home. They contributed to a demise in traditional Confucian values; by the 20s footbinding had become a thing of the past in the cities and in 1934 the Women's Commercial and Savings Bank opened in Shanghai.

Despite such progress, advertising appeared content to mythologise women, particularly rural women, as symbols of a solitary inner strength, suffering personal sacrifice with stoic dignity. This is not to say that women did not perform tasks such as farming or mining equally as well as men, nor to undermine the reality of their self-sacrifice.

It seems naive, however, to suggest without additional evidence, as does the book accompanying this exhibition, that the cultural revolution was any more rooted in the reality of women's lives and the choices available to them, than was the earlier Western-inspired advertising.

Somewhere between the Westernised 'Shanghai style' images of 'woman as consumer', celebrated here by the Design Museum, and the symbolic equality of cultural revolutionary graphics, women's experience has slipped from the stage of public representation – their images merely tacked on to a study of the struggle between two more 'serious' competing ideologies.●

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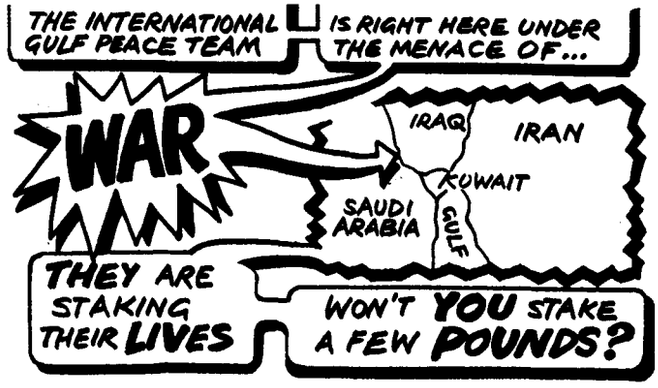
— Ana Vasconcelos



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Ute Tischler looks back on four months of German unity

Staying Power

Since October 3, I've been a citizen of the Federal Republic of Germany. There is no German Democratic Republic (GDR) anymore. My internal debate about whether to leave or to stay is closed, or rather it has been closed for me. It's a difficult situation. The hundreds of thousands who left before went as a result of their own decision. I decided to stay. Now I feel like someone who has been forced into exile.

The new Germany reminds me of the land of unexpected possibilities. Those who have the capital and are prepared to take risks are finding their independence. Everyone seems to be investing in the future and struggling to forget the past. People are desperate to attain the standard of living of the West. There is a boom in small workshops, boutiques, private medical practices, cafés and galleries. Berlin is buzzing as if a second industrial revolution were underway. Even conversations with friends have become a kind of business. The endless exchange of hearty banalities makes me nervous.

My life feels much more public now because I'm always on the look-out for contacts. That's one thing that hasn't changed. Previously we used to call it 'vitamin C'. Contacts were vital if you wanted to find your way around the endless bureaucracy. It's as important now as it ever was. The new society hasn't turned out to be the simple meritocracy that was promised. I am learning fast that the battle for starting positions is essential, long before questions are asked about performance and ability. This is what causes the greatest stress for most people. Those who aren't dynamic now won't get a look in later.

Only recently I had to prove and defend myself as an upright member of society, deserving of a government contract. Shortly before 'unification', the GDR ministry for women and the family decided to commission a number of research projects on GDR history. What money remained was not simply going to be allowed to flow into the coffers of the Federal Republic. A project to document the lives and achievements of women in the GDR was proposed.

Such a project could never have been carried out under the old regime which believed that all conflicts between women and society had long ago been overcome. I was inspired by the challenge to work against the usual cliches about women in the GDR. The payment on offer appeared astronomical. It didn't take us long to agree to the project and sign the contract. For the first time in my life I had the feeling that I was going to be working on something really meaningful.

The trouble started after unification. From one day to the next our employers changed. At the ministry in Berlin, which had been downgraded to a subsidiary, we now only came across 'experts' from Bonn. They grumbled about our contracts. During meetings with them I could detect their disinterest. In the end they tried to block the whole project with a series of delaying tactics.

Obviously Bonn isn't interested in the idea of former GDR citizens documenting the history of the GDR. They have the idea that we will find it impossible to avoid a 'stalinist tendency', and were very reluctant to pay so much money to someone who, as far as they were concerned, had dubious qualifications from the GDR academy. The project and its aims were suspect to them. Nevertheless, I have a valid contract and above all the confidence that, as a former GDR citizen, I know what I'm talking about. I know that my colleagues in Bonn don't have that. The challenge and this confidence are important to me now as the GDR dissolves around me.

The official term for what is happening to the former GDR is 'winding up'. The phrase is on everybody's lips and it means making a blank slate, going back to a new zero hour. This indifferent phrase somehow manages to plumb the depths of political vocabulary. 'Winding-up' means nothing less than 'eliminating'. By using this word the whole process is made out to be quite simple, if rather troublesome. I can't help taking it as a personal insult. At the same time I find myself questioning my judgement; maybe I feel like this because I haven't been able to free myself from the 'ideological baggage' of the past.

Suspicions about former GDR citizens abound in Germany and new sets of questionnaires have been designed to establish the details of our political past. It's hard to see who can be passed as 'clean', when you find that even leading figures in the People's Forum are being denounced as agents of the state security system.

They've taken to replacing people in all kinds of jobs with 'experts' from the West. It's strange, I just don't know any eastern experts in anything anymore. I sometimes wonder if the GDR had an authentic elite at all. At any rate, it is being 'wound up'. The same applies to jobs in arts administration. The community arts officers are now little more than window-dressing. On the whole they have no experience, no real skills, and it's not surprising, because the first condition for taking up a leading position is not having been a member of the former ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED). That's a major problem because most of the competent people were in the SED.

The result is that you now frequently come across 'politically pure' mediocrity. These people really do need a helping hand and they get it in the form of partnerships with officers from twin-regions in west Berlin. Twinning is the big thing these days. But it's got nothing to do with an equal exchange of ideas. It's more about establishing the superiority of the Federal Republic and its citizens. A proper movement has been established to teach the people of eastern Germany 'the way out of their self-imposed

Holger Herschel

Puppet show in Berlin: reflections of a divided city

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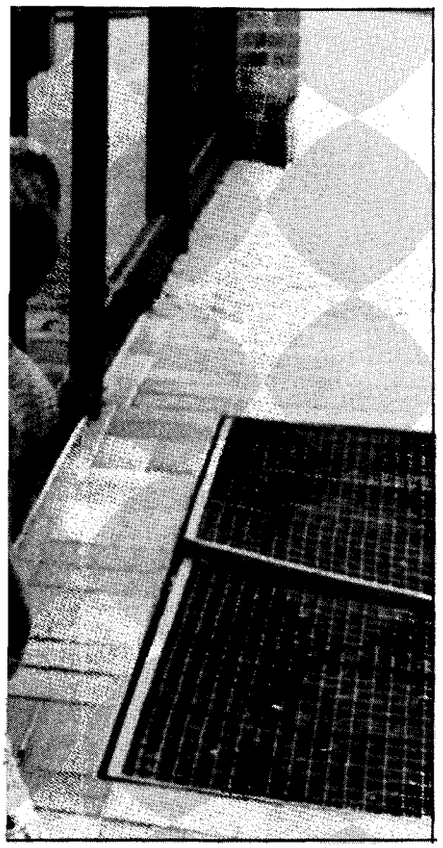

political immaturity'.

Now I'm afraid that I have to swallow new forms of immaturity. Plenty of therapies are on offer to help me deal with all this. A niche will be found for everyone in order to guarantee their ability to participate fully in the new society. Re-training, further education, workshops, self-help groups... a good programme to keep *us* moving, while everything stays the same for *them*. I find this arrogance difficult to stomach. It suggests that every west German is my superior because they have been living in a 'true' democracy.

Our integration into the system of the West is supposed to happen without delay. Already there is little to distinguish east and west Berlin. The seams between the different parts of the city can hardly be distinguished any more, having long since been built over. There are plans to demolish two of the landmarks of east Berlin, the television tower on Alexanderplatz and the old government building.

The city's cleansing department has a real battle on its hands to keep the streets clean because everybody is throwing away the things that are uncomfortable reminders of the recent past. It's all part of the search for a new identity, a break with the past. In most people's homes, at least, this has happened already. But my flat seems to be in permanent chaos. I just can't go through with that decision to become a citizen of the Federal Republic.

But, of course, there is nothing else to be. I am one already. That long debate about whether to go or to stay, that went on inside my head for years, is no longer meaningful. My decision to stay here was the affirmation of my identity. Now I feel as if I'm being asked to let it go and start again. I don't think that I'm ready to do that.

The society that I grew up in is being reduced to a pile of stinking rubbish that is about to be wrapped up in old newspapers and thrown into the bin. Our dreams of mutual acceptance and the blending of the best parts of two cultures have been shattered. If I'm honest, I suppose I never had much optimism that they would come true in the first place. I've had to feed on utopias for too many years already.

I have an incredible and disturbing sense of history, personally experiencing the end of 'actually existing socialism', something that maybe never really existed at all. Whatever it was, it's certainly dying very quickly. The only things that are still twitching are the fantasies of left-wing intellectuals. On the night of October 3 they declared the birth of the 'Utopian Republic' in Prenzlauerberg, the area of Berlin where the artists and intellectuals hang out.

There is a certain nostalgia in my own thoughts and emotions. Ought I to hide it? Should I take my place on the side of history and cross over to the 'winning side'? In order to fit in and feel comfortable in my new home, I'll have to shake off the old burden of the past. For those of us who still have our doubts, the crossing is being made really easy. Just wanting to change is half the battle, or so they reckon. On the other hand everyone knows that changing the 'Ossis', the people from the east, is going to be difficult. All too often you hear people saying that *we don't know how to do an* honest day's work.

I am trying to protect myself against the strangeness around me. It's demanding, because you come across it everywhere you go. The familiar things are being exchanged for those in the West. It's only a question of time before 'what belongs together is brought together', as Kohl put it. In a situation like this, who wants to look nostalgically back to the past? I don't want to be sentimental, but at a time when the whole *basis of your life is being* stripped away, nostalgic attempts to orientate yourself are perhaps only natural, human. I can't say that I'm free from nostalgia.●

Heart Beat Score

1. a. 1 b. 2 c. 4 d. 0
2. a. 4 b. 1 c. 0 d. 3
3. a. 2 b. 3 c. 4 d. 0 e. 0
4. a. 4 b. 3 c. 1 d. 0
5. a. 4 b. 2 c. 0 d. 1
6. a. 3 b. 0 c. -1 d. 4
7. a. 1 b. 4 c. 1 d. 3 e. 0
8. a. 3 b. 4 c. 0 d. 3
9. a. 1 b. 2 c. -1 d. 1 e. -1
10. a. 4 b. 3 c. 0 d. 2 e. -1
11. a. 2 b. 1 c. 0 d. 4
12. a. 4 b. 3 c. 0 d. -1
13. a. 4 b. 1 c. 0 d. 3
14. a. 4 b. 1 c. 0 d. 3
15. a. 4 b. 3 c. -1 d. 3

55 – 65 Dreamboat

Pull yourself together and come back to earth for a while. Valentine's Day was made for you, but you might have been happier living in the 19th century. You probably have an extended family of cuddly toys and cupboards full of souvenirs from your past. Your idea of success at work is embarking on another office romance. You find it difficult to spend time alone and constantly seek an object for your desire. On the brighter side, ever generous and caring, you are likely to single-handedly save the seals.

35 – 54 All Heart

Valentine's Day won't go unnoticed. You will send a card or two and eagerly check the post on the 14th. Romance is integrated into your life in a balanced way. Candle-lit dinners are an institution in your house. You have a lively imagination and can spend time happily exploring the recesses of your own mind. You are generous with your loved ones and a conscientious colleague. But you don't let work or money rule your life and you have no desire to rule the world.

16 – 34 Safe And Sound

You are vaguely aware of Valentine's Day but you feel rather ambivalent about it all. You did send cards a couple of times but that was some time ago. For you, relationships consist of many elements, most of which are practical. Walking hand-in-hand along the beach is an occasional pleasure but stability is your goal. You need a secure home-base from which to go out into the world of work. This may lead you to avoid the ups and downs of romance altogether or to underestimate the importance of sensual pleasure and sometimes take your lovers for granted.

0 – 15 Money Talks

Loosen up and take a look at the world around you! You have a rigid work schedule with little time for leisure. You have probably never thought of sending a Valentine's card recently, though some of you might send bogus ones to unsettle vulnerable colleagues. The world of the imagination is a distant planet that you have no wish to visit. Money and status are the forces that drive you. You tend to model relationships on business partnerships, keeping accounts of what you put in and what you get out.●

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Fay Weldon's journey from fact to fiction

A Novel Career

Fay Weldon talks to Chris Granlund about the books that have shaped her world.

I remember shocking everyone when I was six by weeping all day about *The Snow Queen* and being outraged by *The Little Mermaid*. It was in New Zealand at the end of the war and very few books came into the country. Those that did were carefully selected as being worth transporting so I had a wide range of good books. I went through the contents of all the children's libraries in Christchurch, sometimes taking home three books a day and returning with them in the afternoon asking for more. They'd say I wasn't allowed to change them on the same day, that I hadn't read them properly. But I had.

My father used to make me memorise things. I adored Shakespeare's sonnets and remember them being bought at sixpence each. I came across them the other day and realised how many of them I still know, he seems to have chosen the best ones. I also memorised John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* which I keep trying to recall. I also read a lot of strange and powerful Victorian novels and then on and on into the 20th century. As I grew older I became more of a sociological reader and read all of Shaw and Wells and a touch of Aldous Huxely and that sort of esoteric nonsense.

Ours was a very disturbed and neurotic household. We had to keep moving from house to house because we kept spending and we were in debt. This used to upset my mother but everyone was intelligent and loquacious and believed in the power of ideas. I went to many schools as we moved around. That was very common in New Zealand. There was the convent school where I was terrorised, oppressed and subjugated by the Catholic Church. It was assumed that we would be taught manners there and learn that there was more to life than this wild colonial sea.

I read *The Lives Of The Saints*, in which there was a great deal of torment and torture. It was a bit like *The Story Of O* without the sex. I remember sitting by a picture of St Anthony being tormented by devils. It was an extraordinary training for a little girl to become a masochist. So I had a very heavy dose of Catholicism. I suspect that it makes you believe in God but not in religion. You get the feeling that organised religion is the pits.

So I went off Catholicism which was fortunate because I was in rather severe decline and then I was sent to a school which was bright and light and they read to us. I must have been about nine or 10 and I thought it was just wonderful having people to read to you. I wasn't particularly enthusiastic about anything at school. You went to school to talk to your friends and the education was just a tax you had to pay.

One of the first jobs I had when I came out of university was working as a temporary assistant clerk at the Foreign Office. It was the kind of work graduates were assumed to be good at. You wrote reports and you fed them through to the government departments and if you knew what they wanted to hear you could write anything, you could make it sound good or bad. Then I went into advertising and I worked for a newspaper for a bit and began to realise that truth is non-existent, except in fiction.

But this wasn't a 'career', you must get the idea of a career out of your mind. This wasn't the world in which women had careers unless they went into the civil service. A career is a wild race, isn't it? It's a very new usage of the word. People then had 'jobs', maybe they got a better job but there wasn't this sense of a way out that everybody expects now. At the time there was a sense with me and my friends of being desperate to get married, not to be left behind.

It was only once I was married and had children that it was possible to start thinking about things. A few friends committed suicide and it became a matter of life and death. You could see the injustice of their plight and their misery. And at that time a lot of people began to think that this really wasn't necessary. This is back in the mid-60s and it's quite difficult to understand that the concept of 'sexism' didn't exist in the same way that it does now. But once you become aware of that concept you can fit all kinds of things into it.

It allows you to see yourself as the victim of social relations which are unreasonable and need to be changed. But of course, there is never only one answer, one way out. You can take up this or that position in certain instances and then at other times it turns out to be wrong. You can't remain faithful to one ideology through thick and thin.

Writing should never be read as universal truth. It is all just the words of a writer whether it be Marx or Jane Austen or *The Bible*. Sometimes things sound right but it's all just writers, writers, writers. I remember reading *The Second Sex* and not being able to make much sense of it. It was rather like reading a man's book, I couldn't see my experience of life in it at all. I also began to see that the books I had been reading had, on the whole, been written by men while piles of writing by women had been rejected.

The novel had become a kind of male fantasy in which there were heros and subsidiary creatures called women who had a set of emotions and responses which seemed to have nothing to do with my mind or that of any of my friends. People were muttering about the death of the novel and it seemed very likely to me because there was no longer a relationship between novels and the real world. If I were asked to recommend one book it would have to be *The Bible* read from beginning to end. Not for its truth or religious content, but for the history.●

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Books

Sarah Benton on the dilemma of the Left

Mental Blocks

David Marquand embodies the title of his new book, **The Progressive Dilemma** (*William Heinemann, hbk £20*). His is the story of a man who has travelled from Labour loyalism through the founding of the SDP to the Liberal Democrats and to tentative intellectual leadership. The dilemma is how to sustain political loyalty while cultivating the capacity for fresh thinking.

Political leadership is created by these two parents, mass loyalty and intellectual leadership. Why the two should have proved so incompatible in Britain, where new thinking is often defined as betrayal, is one theme of this book.

The size and organised solidarity of Britain's working class convinced many in the 1920s that Labour was destined to be the master of the century. It could have been the heir to the progressive liberalism of Asquith; yet it inherited the intellectuals without the progressive tradition, suggests Marquand. And they were rendered ineffectual by the solid weight of labourism.

As a consequence, no coalition of the sort needed to create lasting progressive hegemony was created. Labour hardly managed to get a toe-hold in government before the 1939–45 war, and none of its post-war governments was able to renew itself; to use its period of office not only to change society but also to develop its ideas on what to do next, why and how. Marquand is savage about the failures of the Wilson government, with its 'atmosphere of shabby expediency' and 'of febrile and malicious intrigue' and the ineffectual reforms of the Callaghan government.

For these failures, the intellectuals are in part to blame, particularly Tony Crosland who, in the interests of party loyalty, refused to espouse the cause of Europe. Here again is the progressive's dilemma: being true to party and to free thinking. Making the dilemma doubly intractable inside Labour is the distrust, the suspicion of betrayal, the certainty that the arguments of your enemies can only stem from moral weaknesses (ambition, opportunism). Marquand does not offer an explanation of this ethic, but, if it has a connection to labourism, I suspect it lies in the belief that only a shared history of sacrifice, especially in the mines and docks, guarantees authenticity. All else is treacherous.

The blame lies also in social democracy's autocratic imagination: its belief that government should operate on society as the surgeon oper-ates on an unconscious patient. Politics, avers Marquand, in an echo of 1970s eurocommunism, is above all a *process*, pursued by the organs of civil society. It is here that the dynamism for renewal lies.

The questions Marquand asks, with their focus on the relation of intellectuals and class to party, are of the utmost relevance to us in the 1990s. I'm not sure that his book fits the questions, not least because much of it consists of recycled reviews and essays which stem from different preoccupations. He reiterates that labourism has been the chief block to radical thinking, but, in explaining why, relies wholly on the findings of social scientists, who are notoriously weak at explaining *how* structures and ideas come into being. There is no mention of the unique character of British trade unionism. Nor does he explore the sectional conflicts within labour which have shaped so much of its history. There is nothing about the communist tradition, with its fine irony of simultaneously embracing and repressing intellectuals more thoroughly than any other political trend.

In contrast to the centrality of theory to communism, the British Labour Party has, in Marquand's account, its ineffable Englishness. He is eloquent about the English passion of Douglas Jay and, especially, Hugh Gaitskell (which seems, word for word, like Margaret Thatcher's). What is the import of the Labour Party of imperial Britain being led by passionately English men? What does this tell us about the exclusion from leadership of dissenters from Scotland or the Jewish East End, from the Caribbean and India? Nor does he explore the conservatism of labour's ethic of fraternity. This is disappointing, for Marquand is one of the few authoritative male voices to have recognised feminism as significant; yet sexual conservatism, and its distinction between private and public, was a founding force of the labour ethic (just as it remains a powerful force inhibiting the development of civic cultures round the world).

Where I think this book works best is in its most recent chapters on political culture, reflecting his political journey of the 1980s and arguments over the social market with, in particular, Robert Skidelsky. Marquand suggests various causes of our anti-political culture. One is 'reductionist individualism' which, in a wonderfully lucid passage, he identifies as the dominant belief which fatally denies the possibility of moral, social change. Another is the false trail pursued by TH Marshall who believed that Britain had already assimilated civic and political citizenship; the next task was social citizenship. But, argues Marquand – in a riposte to the SDP's social market – social citizenship demands a larger role for politics and it is here that we can see how illusory is our political citizenship.

Clearly, the answer is for intellectuals to apply themselves with frantic vigour to the cultivation of a political

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culture – dynamic, democratic, decentralised. Significantly, to recover an intellectual tradition for himself, Marquand has returned to the classics of liberalism, strong on the individual, almost silent on the state. Yet his explanation of how progressive liberalism died (destroyed by loathsome Lloyd George) is unconvincing. In 1914, Liberal intellectuals could neither attract the loyalty of rebellious Empires, women, workers, nor find an intellectual frame for their needs. The danger lurking in Marquand's omissions is that, as heir to this tradition, he is answering to his forebears, not to the actual needs and constituencies of today.●

Jon Bird on postmodern corruption in LA

Fallen Angels

Mike Davis's book **City Of Quartz** (*Verso, hbk 18.95*) is subtitled *Excavating The Future In Los Angeles*, and he titles his prologue 'The View From Futures Past'. He thereby defines his project as a form of Foucauldian mapping of capitalism's dystopian future – a future projected from the past and present of Los Angeles as the paradigmatic geo-cultural entity of the post-modern world.

Exercising a surgeon's skill to unpick the sutured surfaces and historical myths of corporate postmodernism, Davis remorselessly uncovers a densely woven fabric of corruption, civic neglect, social conflict, and a tapestry of power that have defined the economic and cultural history of southern California during the last 150 years.

A quote from Walter Benjamin introduces the narrative, and Davis's study of LA as a 'deracinated urban hell' stands as a polarity to Benjamin's elegaic celebration of Paris as modernism's utopian urban realisation.

Benjamin described the boulevards and arcades of Paris, made into sites of leisure and social exchange by Baron Hausmann's restructuring of the urban fabric to produce imperial vistas and commodified public spaces – the domain of the 'flâneur'. Davis cites the example of Alexander Haagen (the shopping-mall king of southern California), whose early shopping centres reproduced, in plan, Jeremy Bentham's design for maximum surveillance: the panoptican prison. The financial potential and ability to consume becomes, in the early-1980s in LA, the object of protection and control – there is the ever-present threat (or promise) of 'armed response'.

Where others have come in the past to praise the architectural extravaganzas and simulated spectacles of LA, (and both Fredric Jameson and Jean Baudrillard are indicted), Davis buries them under an awesome accumulation of fact, anecdote, interpretation and critique that unfolds the terrifying tale of the political economy of LA.

Whoever reads this book – and it ought to be compulsory, particularly as an extremely effective antidote to any excess of the 'post-moderns' – will select favourite passages that illuminate the total picture. In a chapter analysing the confrontations between developers and homeowners, a conflict encompassing various interest groups, ethnic minorities, and apartment block realtors, the overloaded sewer and flood-control systems become the nodal point on the battleground between conservation awareness and land speculation.

Davis vividly introduces this section with an anecdote told by Aldous Huxley of walking on Hyperion Beach with Thomas Mann in 1945, and encountering '10m used condoms': 'as far as the eye could reach in all directions, the sand was covered with small whitish objects, like dead caterpillars'. This overwhelming evidence of the LA residents' sexual profligacy was resolved 15 years later, along with all the accumulated waste of 3m people, by the Hyperion Activated Sludge Plant – a technological marvel that finally gave in to overload in 1987; the first in a series of increasingly serious eco-disasters, from groundwater contamination to gridlock, and the worst air pollution in the advanced industrial world.

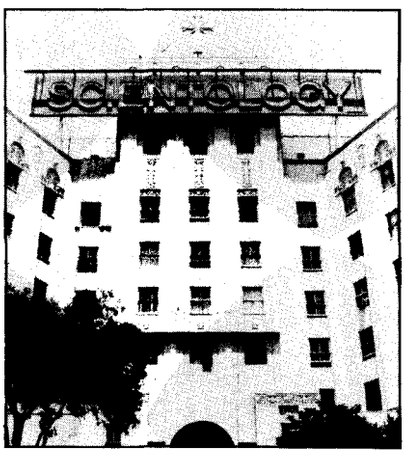
In another chapter – 'Fortress LA' – Davis charts the 'archisemiotics of class war': design and architecture in the service of the public and private security apparatuses, combining to concentrate individual safety and security within heavily fortified locales, constantly patrolled and kept under surveillance, and where access is restricted or forbidden to the poor and the homeless.

This segregation and militarisation of public space along class and racial divisions, often through an architecture exhibiting all the characteristics of post-modern pastiche, is fundamentally reshaping 'the social relations of the built environment'. Security becomes not only the corollary of a certain income and lifestyle, but also the material *and symbolic* representation of the 'middle-class imagination', a barrier beyond which the fantasies and fears of inner-city life are projected, to find their realisation in dystopian fictions like *Blade Runner* and *Colors*.

This produces a cycle of anxiety and aggressive response that justifies the most brutal excesses of, on the one hand the Los Angeles Police Department, (anti-drug raids that saturate cordoned-off areas with over 1,000 patrolmen, elite tactical squads and a special anti-gang taskforce 'arresting more black youth than at any time since the Watts Rebellion of 1965'), and, on the other, City Hall's actions against the homeless in a series of policies and strategies designed both to contain and remove the socially oppressed.

There is a bizarre inventiveness to the design deterrents that Davis lists: the Rapid Transit District's 'barrel-shaped bus bench' that discourages sitting for more than a few moments and makes sleeping impossible; or the employment by local businesses of 'overhead sprinkler systems programmed to drench unsuspecting sleepers at random times during the night'.

As one numbing example follows the next in this catalogue of the 'cultural logic of late capital', all previous images of the city as the civic space for democratic exchange and social interaction are obliterated, to be replaced by a representation of Los Angeles as a festering wound where every spectacle of post-modern indulgence – corporate or individual – barely conceals a genealogy of power and corruption.



Just as modernism reified the city as the focus of the unleashing of the forces of technological and social progress, so postmodernism has focused upon the metropolis as a screen for the projection of the culture's visions and nightmares.

Mike Davis systematically unpicks the connections between the fantasies of the privileged, the powerful and the protected, and shows how their fears of *otherness* (in all its manifestations and guises) have created the political and geo-cultural logic of excess, paranoia and despair as it is lived as everyday reality in Los Angeles today. And we all know that what happens in America today...●

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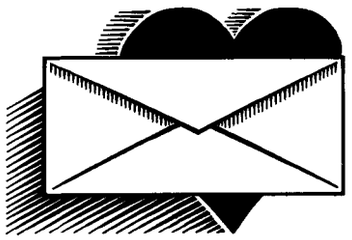

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MESSAGES

BRIAN KENNEDY.
We were saddened to hear of the death of Brian whose commitment, intelligence and good humour will be greatly missed. Our sympathies are with those who were close to him. From the staff of Marxism Today.

● **I am carrying out research for a TV programme** on the possible abuse of psychiatry in Britain, and am particularly interested in cases where people have been discredited as being mentally ill, and even hospitalised, for political reasons. Past examples include a railwayman showing solidarity with striking miners during the '84-'85 dispute by preventing the movement of coal by rail, who was declared mentally unstable and relieved of his duties, and a marine who was hospitalised after having misgivings about the Falklands war. If you know of any other recent examples of a similar nature, please contact Robert Dando at Flat 18, Bruce House, 195 Preston Hill, Harrow, Middx HA3 9UN.

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MT EVENTS

● **Sexuality Event: Major day event to** be held on Saturday July 13th in London. The organising group welcomes new members. For further details contact North London MT Forum, c/o 28 Wargrave Avenue, London N15 6UD.

● **New Times '91: A series of six** seminars examining the key concepts that underpin New Times. Registration for the series costs £5, all seminars take place at Stroud Green Community Centre, Stapleton Hall Rd, London N4, starting at 7.45pm. The first seminar takes place on Thursday February 14th. Details: (081) 809 5068.

● **Haringey: "Labour Pains"**, a roundtable discussion on Labour's economic strategy with speakers from Labour Co-ordinating Cttee, Haringey Council and others. Tuesday February 19th, 7.45pm at Hornsey Library, Haringey Pk, Crouch End, London N8. Organised by Haringey Marxism Today Group.

● **Out of the Blue: A conference looking beyond** Thatcherism at the issues of political democracy, the environment and the new world order. Leeds, Saturday February 9th. Details from Bill Innes, (0532) 626343.

● **Cardiff: Active Marxism Today group** *continues to meet each month. Details* from Peter Davies on (0222) 227255.

MT TRAVEL

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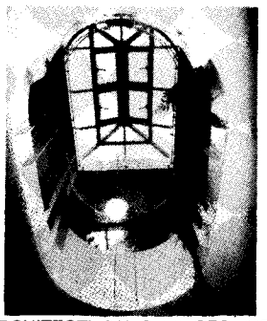

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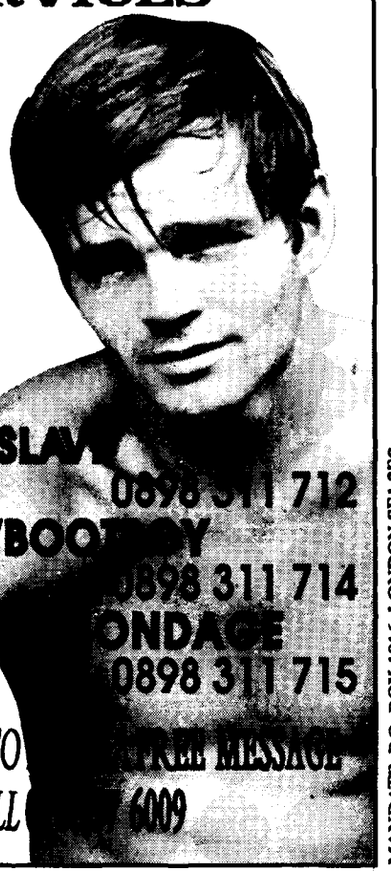

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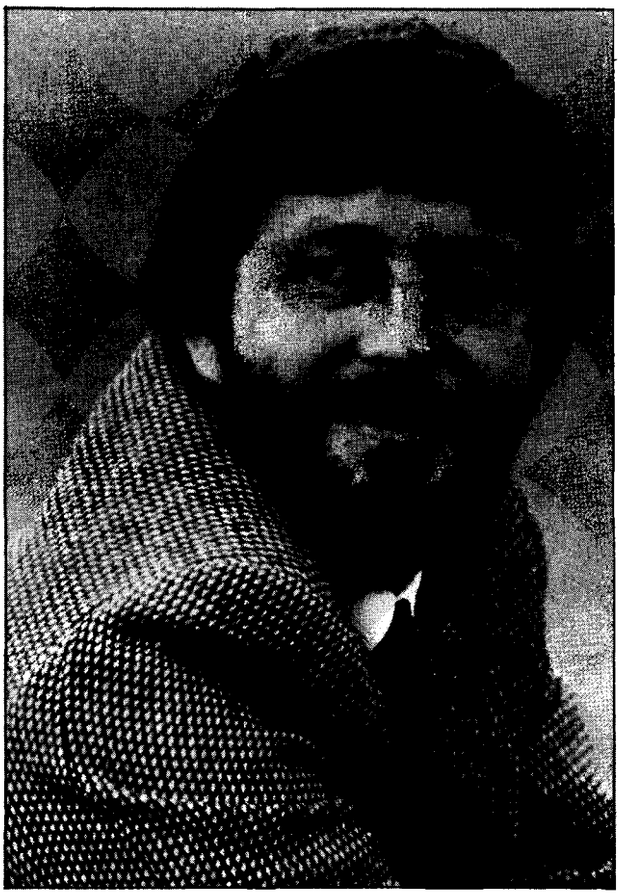
David Blunkett



David Blunkett was born in Sheffield in 1947 and has been blind since birth. He joined the Labour Party at the age of 16, was leader of Sheffield Council for seven years, and has been the MP for Sheffield Brightside since 1987. In 1988 he was appointed to the opposition front bench and is currently Labour's spokesperson on local government and the poll tax as well as a member of Labour's national executive committee. He is the father of three children.

What magazines and newspapers do you take? *The Independent, The Guardian, Financial Times, Daily Mirror, Scotsman, Tribune, New Statesman And Society* and a range of periodicals.

What foreign languages do you speak? Esperanto!

What is your favourite tv/radio programme? Television drama is at an all time low so I tend to watch current affairs programmes. Radio drama is better, but patchy.

When do you listen to music? Usually late in the evening or when travelling.

When was the last time you prayed? Prayer is personal.

What was your first thought this morning? Is it really 6.20am?

What is your favourite meeting place? My own home and garden, where I can get some privacy and quietness to start to think again.

What is your worst piece of architecture? The Odeon Cinema development in Sheffield city centre which is modelled on the Pompidou Centre in Paris.

Who do you reveal your secrets to? If I answered this question as someone active in public life I'd be a fool.

What makes you feel secure? Knowing that I have friendship which will not let me down.

How regularly do you consult your horoscope? Never.

How do you envy your children's lifestyle? I would love to be their age, knowing what I know now, and would get more fun from my early years than I did.

You're driving through a hot, desolate expanse. What's playing on the stereo? Delius – *Song Of Summer*.

Which is your city of the nineties? Sheffield, because it retains a sense of identity and social cohesion.

Where is your favourite holiday destination? I enjoy sun and sea, so the unspoiled north of Majorca or Yugoslavia.

How has your diet changed in the past 10 years? It has gone back to what I really like. The traditional wholesome food on which I was brought up. Little from a packet and rarely vegetarian.

What physical exercise do you do? Apart from a lot of walking, a small amount of regular exercises each morning.

Under what circumstances would you use private medicine? To save the life of a loved one, if I was denied access to NHS treatment in time.

At what age do you want to stop working? I would like to gently ease myself out of employment in time to enjoy a little leisure.

Do you own shares? No.

How influenced are you by advertising? Adversely! It tends to put me off things.

What are you doing for the environment? I am being very careful with my own lifestyle and habits. Arguing for a change in our transport systems and campaigning to reduce pollution from noise, both personal and public.

What part of your life would you take into a next life? I would not. The joy we have comes from the moment.

What do you no longer believe in? The involvement of everyone in political activity and tedious mind-blowing meetings.

What current campaign do you most support? Protecting the survival of our planet clearly over-rides immediate, if pressing, issues. But inevitably my prime political concern is to replace the poll tax and the values and principles which underpin it.

What do you now own that you had never dreamt of owning? A bidet.

What is the most amount of money you've spent on an item of clothing? A suit, not much more than £100.

What hi-tech device scares you? I sometimes think the world is going mad. Technology should be our servant, not our master.

How much time do you spend each day on the phone? An hour and a half.

Complete this sentence: If I were dictator for a day... I would extend democracy to give meaningful power and influence to people to exercise decision-making over their own and the lives of those around them.

How do you personally hope to change by the end of the millennium? I hope to become more tolerant and to see how best to get things done rather than simply satisfy my own ego.●

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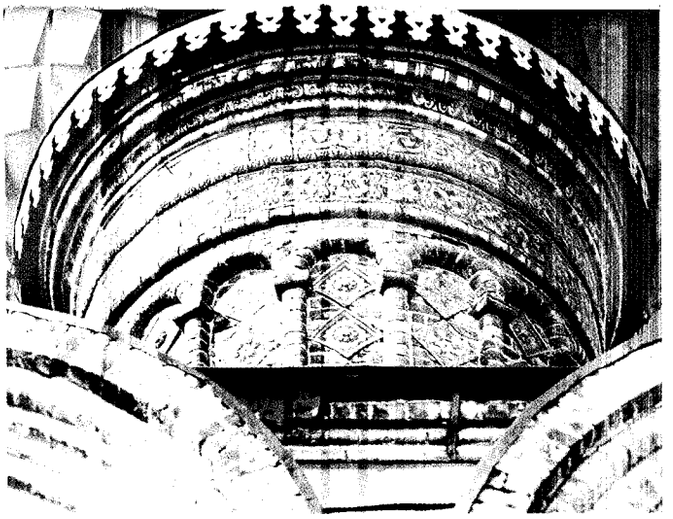

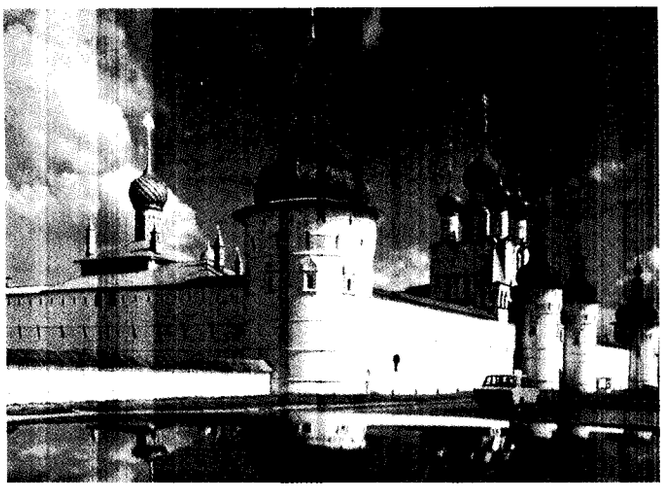

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